

THE
CAMBRIDGE
MEDIEVAL HISTORY

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VOLUME IV

THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE
(717—1453)

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1923

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FIRST BULGARIAN EMPIRE
(679-1018).

LIKE the Serbs, but unlike the Albanians, the Bulgarians are not autochthonous inhabitants of the Balkan country to which they have given their name. It was not till 679¹ that this Finnish or Tartar race, after numerous previous incursions into the Balkan provinces of the Byzantine Empire, definitely abandoned the triangle formed by the Black Sea, the Dnieper, and the Danube (the modern Bessarabia), and settled between the Danube and the Balkans (the ancient Moesia). Thus, the first Bulgarian state practically coincided with the Bulgarian principality created 1200 years later by the Treaty of Berlin. The Finnish or Tartar invaders found this country already peopled with Slavs, immigrants like themselves but of different customs and language. As time went on, the conquered, as so often happens, absorbed the conquerors; the Bulgarians adopted the Slav speech of the vanquished; the country received the name of the invaders, and became known to all time as "Bulgaria." Still, after the lapse of more than twelve centuries, the "Bulgarians," as this amalgam of races came to be called, possess qualities differing from those of their purely Slav neighbours, and during the recent European war Bulgarian political writers reminded the world that the Bulgarian people was not of Slavonic origin.

The Patriarch Nicephorus has left the earliest account of this Bulgarian invasion and settlement. He tells how the Bulgarians originally lived on the shores of the Sea of Azov and on the banks of the river Kuban; how their chief, Kovrat (identified with the "Kurt" of the earliest list of Bulgarian rulers), left five sons, the third of whom, Asparuch (or Isparith), migrated to Bessarabia. There he and his Bulgarians might have remained, had not the Emperor Constantine IV Pogonatus undertaken an expedition for the purpose of punishing them for their raids into the borderlands of his dominions. The strength of the Bulgarian position in a difficult country and an attack of gout obliged the Emperor to retire to Mesembria. A panic seized the troops left behind to continue the siege; the Bulgarians pursued them across the Danube as far as Varna. Neither Greeks nor Slavs offered resistance; the Emperor had to make peace and pay a tribute, in order to save Thrace from invasion.

¹ Professor Bury believes that the migration occurred earlier, during the reign of Constans II (641-668). *The Chronological Cycle of the Bulgarians* (BZ. xix. 1910).

The Bulgarians established their first capital in an entrenched camp at Pliska, the modern Turkish village of Aboba to the north-east of Shumla. Recent excavations have unearthed this previously unknown portion of Bulgarian history, and have laid bare the great fortifications, the inner stronghold, and the palace of the "Sublime Khan," as the primitive ruler was called. Unlike modern Bulgaria, early Bulgaria was an aristocratic state, with two grades of nobility, the *boljarin* and the *ugain*, but leading nobles of both orders bore the coveted title of *bagatur* ("hero"). As in Albania to-day, the clan was the basis of the social system. The official language of the primitive Bulgarian Chancery was Greek, but not exactly the Greek of Byzantium—a native tribute to the far more advanced culture of the Empire. The first two centuries of Bulgarian history down to the introduction of Christianity are an almost continuous series of campaigns against the Byzantine Empire, for which, with scarcely an exception, our sources are exclusively Greek or Frankish. Justinian II began these Greco-Bulgarian wars by refusing to pay the tribute to Isparich, and narrowly escaped from a Bulgarian ambushade. Yet this same Emperor, after his deposition and banishment to the Crimea, owed his restoration to the aid of Isparich's successor Tervel. Escaping to Bulgaria, he promised his daughter to Tervel as the price of his assistance, and bestowed upon his benefactor a royal robe and the honorary title of "Caesar." Three years later, however, in 707, he so far forgot the benefits received as to break the peace and again invade Bulgaria, only to receive a severe defeat at Anchialus, whence he was forced to flee by sea to Constantinople. Once more we find him appealing, not in vain, for Tervel's assistance, and during the brief reigns of Justinian II's three successors hostilities were spasmodic. But when Leo the Isaurian had firmly established himself on the throne, Tervel found it useless to renew the part of king-maker and attempt to restore the fallen Emperor, Anastasius II. Indeed, after Tervel's day and the reigns of two shadowy rulers, the overthrow of the Bulgarian reigning dynasty of Dulo (to which Kurt and his successors had belonged) by the usurper Kormisosh of the clan of Ukil, led to civil war, which weakened the hitherto flourishing Bulgarian state at the time when an energetic Emperor, Constantine V Copronymus, sat upon the Byzantine throne.

In the intervals of his struggle with the monks, the Iconoclast Emperor conducted seven campaigns against the Bulgarians, whom he had alarmed by planting Syrian and Armenian colonists in Thrace. He took vengeance for a Bulgarian raid to Constantinople by invading Bulgaria, but on a second invasion suffered a severe defeat at Veregava (now the Vrbitsa pass between Shumla and Yamboli). Another dynastic revolution prevented the victors from reaping the fruits of their victory. The usurper disappeared from history, but the old dynasty did not profit by his removal from the scene. On the contrary, a general massacre of the house of Dulo ensued, and a certain Telets of the clan of Ugain was

proclaimed Khan. Telets was, however, defeated by the Emperor near Anchialus, and his disillusioned countrymen put him to death, and restored the dynasty of Kormisosh in the person of his son-in-law Sabin. The latter's attempt to make peace with the Emperor was followed, however, by his deposition, and it was reserved for his successor, Bayan, to come to terms with Byzantium, where Sabin had taken refuge. But Bayan had a rival in his own country, Umar, Sabin's nominee, and to support him the Emperor invaded Bulgaria, and defeated Bayan's brother and successor Toktu in the woods near the Danube in 765. Both brothers were slain, most of the country was plundered, and the villages laid in ashes. Next year, however, the Greek fleet was almost destroyed by a storm in the Black Sea, but the Emperor routed the Bulgarians at Lithosoria during a further punitive expedition known as "the noble war," because no Christians fell. These sudden reverses of fortune are characteristic of Bulgarian history. The next Bulgarian Khan, Telerig, warned by these events of the existence of a Byzantine party in Bulgaria, obtained by a ruse from the Emperor the names of the latter's adherents, whom he put to death. Constantine was in an ecstasy of rage, but died in the course of a fresh expedition against the barbarian who had outwitted him. Telerig, however, was obliged to seek refuge with the next Emperor, Leo IV, who conferred upon him the rank of patrician and the hand of an imperial princess, besides acting as his godfather when he embraced Christianity. Telerig's successor, Kardam, after defeating Constantine VI, wrote to him an insolent letter, threatening to march to the Golden Gate of Constantinople unless the Emperor paid the promised tribute. Constantine sarcastically replied that he would not trouble an old man to undertake so long a journey, but that he would come himself—with an army. The Bulgarian fled before him, and for ten years there was peace between the Greeks and their already dangerous rivals.

In the first decade of the ninth century the first striking figure in Bulgarian history mounted the throne of Pliska. This was Krum—a name still familiar to readers of Balkan polemics. Krum, whose realm at his accession embraced Danubian Bulgaria and Wallachia, "Bulgaria beyond the Danube," coveted Macedonia—the goal of so many Bulgarian ambitions in all ages. He invaded the district watered by the Strymon, defeated the Greek garrisons, and seized a large sum of money intended as pay for the soldiers. More important still, in 809 he captured Sardica, the modern Sofia, then the northernmost outpost of the Empire against Bulgaria, put the garrison to death, and destroyed the fortifications. The Emperor Nicephorus I retaliated by spending Easter in Krum's palace at Pliska, which he plundered; he foresaw Bulgarian designs upon Macedonia and endeavoured to check the growth of the Slav population there by compulsory colonisation from other provinces. He then resolved to crush his enemy, and, after long preparation, marched

against him in 811. Proudly rejecting Krum's offer of peace, he again occupied Pliska, set his seal on the Bulgarian treasury, and loftily disregarded the humble petition of Krum: "Lo, thou hast conquered; take what pleaseth thee, and go in peace." Krum, driven to desperation, closed the Balkan passes in the enemy's rear, and the invaders found themselves caught, as in a trap, in an enclosed valley, perhaps that still called "the Greek Hollow" near Razboina. Nicephorus saw that there was no hope: "Even if we become birds," he exclaimed, "none of us can escape!" On 26 July the Greek army was annihilated; no prisoners were taken; for the first time since the death of Valens four centuries earlier an Emperor had fallen in battle; and, to add to the disgrace, his head, after being exposed on a lance, was lined with silver and used as a goblet, in which the savage Bulgarian pledged his nobles at state banquets. Yet the lexicographer Suidas¹ would have us believe that this primitive savage was the author of a code of laws—one of which ordered the uprooting of every vine in Bulgaria, to prevent drunkenness, while another bade his subjects give to a beggar sufficient to prevent him ever feeling the pinch of want again. To complete the disaster, Nicephorus' son, the Emperor Stauracius, died of his wounds.

This was not Krum's only triumph over the Greeks. In 812 he captured Develtus and Mesembria, as the war party at Constantinople, headed by Theodore of Studion, declined to renew an old Greco-Bulgarian commercial treaty of some fifty years earlier, which had permitted merchants duly provided with seals and passports to carry on trade in either state, and under which the Bulgarian ruler was entitled to a gift of clothing and 30 lbs. of red-dyed skins. The treaty also fixed the Greco-Bulgarian frontier at the hills of Meleona, well to the south of the Balkans, and stipulated for the extradition of deserters. When the Emperor Michael I marched against him in 813, Krum inflicted a severe defeat at Versinicia near Hadrianople, and the rare circumstance of the Bulgarians defeating the trained hosts of Byzantium in the open country led to the suspicion of treachery on the part of the general, Leo the Armenian. At any rate, he profited by the disaster, for he supplanted Michael on the throne, and thus the rude Bulgarian could boast that he had slain one Roman Emperor and caused the death of another and the dethronement of a third. He now burned to take the Imperial city; but this was a task beyond his powers. His strange human sacrifices before the Golden Gate, his public ablutions, and the homage of his harem, did not compensate for lack of experience in so formidable a siege. He then claimed to erect his lance over the Golden Gate, and, when that insolent request was refused, demanded an annual tribute, a quantity of fine raiment, and a certain number of picked damsels. The new Emperor, Leo V, offered to discuss these last proposals, in order to set an ambush for his enemy. Krum unsuspectingly accepted the offer, and narrowly

¹ Suidas, ed. Gaisford, i. 761-62; Cedrenus, ii. 41-42; *BZ.* xvi. 254-57.

escaped assassination, thanks, so a monkish chronicler expresses it, to the sins of his would-be assassins. The smoking suburbs of Byzantium were the testimony of his revenge; the palace of St Mamas perished in the flames; the shores of the Hellespont and the interior of Thrace were devastated. Exactly a thousand years later, another Bulgarian army reached Chatalja, the last bulwark of Constantinople, and the Bulgarian siege of 813 was exhumed as an historical precedent.

Hadrianople succumbed to hunger; its inhabitants and those of other Thracian towns were carried off to "Bulgaria beyond the Danube," among them the future Emperor, Basil I. But, by one of those sudden changes of fortune with which recent Bulgarian history has familiarised us, Leo inflicted such a crushing defeat upon the Bulgarians near Mesembria, that the spot where he had lain in wait was long pointed out as "Leo's hill." To avenge this disaster, Krum prepared for another siege of Constantinople, and this time intended to appear with a complete siege train before the walls. But, as in the case of the great Serbian Tsar, Stephen Dušan, death cut short the Bulgarian's enterprise. On 14 April 814 Krum burst a blood-vessel. After a brief period of civil war, Krum's son, Omurtag, became "Sublime Khan," and concluded a thirty years' peace with the Empire, of which a summary has been preserved. By this treaty Thrace was partitioned between the Greeks and the Bulgarians, and the frontier ran from Develtus to the fortress of Makroliváda, between Hadrianople and Philippopolis, whence it turned northward to the Balkans. It was not a paper frontier such as diplomacy loves to trace on maps, but consisted of a rampart and trench, known to Byzantine historians as "the Great Fence" and to the modern peasants, who still tell strange stories of how it was made, as the *Erkesiya*, from a Turkish word meaning a "cutting in the earth."¹

Thus guaranteed against a conflict with the Greeks, the Bulgarians turned their attention westward, and for the first time came into touch with the Frankish Empire, which had established its authority as far south as Croatia. In 824 a Bulgarian embassy appeared at the court of Louis the Pious, in order to regulate the Franco-Bulgarian frontiers, which marched together near Belgrade. The Western Emperor, knowing nothing about the Bulgarians and their geographical claims, sent an envoy of his own to make inquiries on the spot, and, after keeping the Bulgarian mission waiting at Aix-la-Chapelle, finally sent it back without any definite reply. Omurtag, anxious to maintain his prestige over the Slavs beyond the Danube, who had shewn signs of placing themselves under the protection of his powerful neighbour, invaded Pannonia and set up Bulgarian governors there. In fact, Syrmia and eastern Hungary remained Bulgarian till the Magyar conquest.

A Greek inscription on a pillar of the church of the Forty Martyrs at Trnovo commemorates the works of "the Sublime Khan Omurtag"—

¹ Bury in *EHR.* (1910), xxv. 276-87.

the "house of high renown" which he "built on the Danube," and the "sepulchre" which he "made mid-way" between that and his "old house" at Pliska. Of these two constructions the former has been identified with the ruined fortress of Kadykei near Turtukai on the Danube (the Bulgaro-Roumanian frontier according to the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913), the latter with a mound near the village of Mumdzhilar. Another Greek inscription, recently discovered at Chatalar, records a still more important creation of this ruler—"a palace on the river Tutsa," intended to overawe the Greeks. This "palace," founded, as the inscription informs us, in 821-22, was none other than the future capital of Bulgaria, Great Prêslav, or "the Glorious," a little to the south-west of Shumla. Despite the prayer uttered in this inscription that "the divine ruler may press down the Emperor with his foot," Omurtag, so far from attacking the Greek Empire, actually aided Michael II in 823 against the rebel Thomas, who was besieging Constantinople. Thus Byzantium, besieged by one Bulgarian ruler, was, ten years later, relieved by another. There is little continuity of policy in the Balkans.

Omurtag, who was still alive in 827, was succeeded by his son Presiam, or Malomir as he was called in the increasingly important Slavonic idiom of Bulgaria¹. His reign is important historically because it was unfortunately marred by the first of the long series of Serbo-Bulgarian wars, of which our own generation has seen three. Characteristically it seems to have arisen out of the Bulgarian occupation of western Macedonia. The Serbian prince, Vlastimir, during a three years' struggle, inflicted heavy losses on the Bulgarians. Presiam's nephew and successor, the famous Boris, who began his long reign in 852, was again defeated by Vlastimir's three sons, and his own son Vladimir with twelve great nobles was captured. Boris had to sue for peace to save the prisoners; he was no more fortunate in his quarrel with the Croats, and he maintained towards the Greeks the pacific policy of Omurtag.

The name of Boris is indelibly connected with the conversion of the Bulgarians to Christianity. Sporadic attempts at conversion had already been made, and with sufficient success to provoke persecution by Omurtag, whose eldest son is even said to have become a proselyte. But in the time of Boris Christianity became the State religion. In the Near East politics and religion are inextricably mingled, and it is probable that political considerations may have helped to influence the Bulgarian ruler. Boris, placed midway between the Western and the Eastern Empire, had played an equivocal part between Louis the German and Rostislav of Moravia, now supporting the German, now the Slav. The Moravian prince pointed out to Byzantium the danger to the whole Balkan peninsula of a Bulgaro-German alliance, especially if Boris, as his German ally desired, adopted the Western faith. Michael III at once saw the gravity of the situation; he made a hostile demonstration against Bulgaria,

¹ Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire*, Appendix X.

whose ruler submitted without a blow, agreed to accept the Orthodox form of Christianity, thus becoming ecclesiastically dependent on the Ecumenical Patriarch, and received, as a slight concession, a small rectification of his frontier in the shape of an uninhabited district. Boris was baptised in 864-65, the Emperor acted as his sponsor, and the convert took his sponsor's name of Michael. Other less mundane reasons for his conversion are given. It is said that, during a severe famine, he was moved by the appeals of his sister (who had embraced Christianity during her captivity in Constantinople) and by the arguments of a captive monk, Theodore Koupharas, to become a Christian. Another story represents him as terrified into acceptance of the faith by the realistic picture of the Last Judgment painted for him by a Greek artist, Methodius. His attempt, however, to force baptism upon his heathen subjects led to a revolt of the nobles. He put down this insurrection with the utmost severity; he executed 52 nobles with their wives and families, while sparing the common folk. The celebrated Patriarch Photius sent a literary essay to his "well-beloved son" on the heresies that beset, and the duties that await, a model Christian prince, and missionaries—Greeks, Armenians, and others—flooded Bulgaria. Perplexed by their different precepts and alarmed at the reluctance of the Patriarch to appoint a bishop for Bulgaria, Boris craftily sent an embassy to Pope Nicholas I, asking him to send a bishop and priests, and propounding a list of 106 theological and social questions, upon which he desired the Pope's authoritative opinion. This singular catalogue of doubts included such diverse subjects as the desirability of wearing drawers (which the Pope pronounced to be immaterial), the expediency of the sovereign dining alone (which was declared to be bad manners), the right way with pagans and apostates, and the appointment of a Bulgarian Patriarch. Nicholas I sent Formosus, afterwards Pope, and another bishop as his legates to Bulgaria with replies to these questions, denouncing the practice of torturing prisoners and other barbarous customs, but putting aside for the present the awkward question of a Patriarch; Bulgaria was, however, to have a bishop, and later on an archbishop. Photius in reply denounced the proceedings of the Roman Church in Bulgaria, and the reluctance of the new Pope Hadrian II to nominate as archbishop a person recommended by Boris made the indignant Bulgarian abandon Rome for Byzantium, which gladly sent him an archbishop and ten bishops. The Archbishop of Bulgaria took the next place after the Patriarch at festivities; Boris' son, the future Tsar Simeon, was sent to study Demosthenes and Aristotle at Constantinople. One further step towards the popularisation of Christianity in Bulgaria remained to be taken—the introduction of the Slavonic liturgy and books of devotion. This was, towards the end of Boris' reign, the work of the disciples of Methodius, one of the two famous "Slavonic Apostles," when they were driven from Moravia. Boris in 888 retired into a cloister, whence four years later he temporarily emerged to

depose his elder son Vladimir, whose excesses had endangered the state. After placing his younger son Simeon on the throne in 893, Boris lived on till 907, and died in the odour of sanctity, the first of Bulgaria's national saints.

With Simeon began again the struggle between Greeks and Bulgarians. Two Greek merchants, who had obtained from the Emperor Leo VI the monopoly of the Bulgarian trade, diverted it from Constantinople to Salonica, and placed heavy duties upon the Bulgarian traders. The latter complained to Simeon, and Simeon to the Emperor, but backstairs influence at the palace prevented his complaints from being heard, and forced him to resort to arms. He defeated the imperial forces, and sent back the captives with their noses cut off. Leo summoned the Magyars across the Danube to his aid; Simeon was defeated and his country devastated up to the gates of Prêslav. But, when the Magyars withdrew, he defeated a Greek army at Bulgaróphygos near Hadrianople and ravaged the homes of the Magyars during their absence on a distant expedition. An interval of peace ensued, during which the classically educated ruler endeavoured to acclimatise Byzantine literature among his recalcitrant subjects. Simeon collected and had translated 135 speeches of Chrysostom; Constantine, a pupil of the "Apostle" Methodius, translated another collection of homilies, and, at Simeon's command, four orations of St Athanasius; John the Exarch dedicated to Simeon his *Shestodnev* (or "Hexameron"), a compilation describing the creation from Aristotle and the Fathers; a monk Grigori translated for him the chronicle of John Malalas with additions; while several unknown writers drew up an encyclopaedia of the contemporary knowledge of Byzantium. There was nothing original in this literature; but, if it was not the natural product of the Bulgarian spirit, it diffused a certain culture among the few, and reflected credit upon the royal patron, whom his contemporaries likened to the Ptolemies for his promotion of learning. Simeon had learned also at Constantinople the love of magnificence as well as of literature. If we may believe his contemporary, John the Exarch, his residence at Great Prêslav, whither the capital had now been removed from Pliska, was a marvel to behold, with its palaces and churches, its paintings, its marble, copper, gold, and silver ornaments. In the palace sat the sovereign "in a garment studded with pearls, a chain of coins round his neck and bracelets on his wrists, girt about with a purple girdle, and with a golden sword at his side." Of all this splendour, and of a city which Nicetas in the thirteenth century described as "having the largest circuit of any in the Balkans," a few scanty ruins remain.

Alexander, the successor of Leo VI, mortally offended Simeon by rejecting his offer to renew the treaty concluded with his father. The accession of the child Constantine Porphyrogenitus gave him his opportunity for revenge. In 913, a century after Krum, he appeared with an army before Constantinople; next year he obtained Hadrianople by

treachery; and, on 20 August 917, he annihilated the Byzantine army at Anchialus¹, where half a century later the bones of the slain were still visible. Bulgaria by this victory became for a brief period the dominant power of the Balkan peninsula. Simeon's dominions stretched from the Black to the Ionian Sea, except for a few Byzantine fortresses on the Albanian coast; Niš and Belgrade were Bulgarian; but the Aegean coast remained Greek. In 923 Simeon besieged Constantinople, and Hadrianople again surrendered to the Bulgarians. The title of "Sublime Khan" or even that of "Prince" seemed inadequate for the ruler of such a vast realm; accordingly Simeon assumed the style of "Tsar of the Bulgarians and Greeks," receiving his crown from Rome, while, as a natural concomitant of the imperial dignity, the head of the Bulgarian Church became "Patriarch of Prêslav," with his residence at Silistria.

Simeon's career closed in the midst of wars against the Serbs and Croats, in the course of which he had laid Serbia waste but had been defeated by the Croats. He died in 927, and, like most strong Balkan rulers, was succeeded by a weak man. He had excluded his eldest son Michael from the succession and confined him in a monastery; but his second son, Tsar Peter, had the temperament of a pacifist. His first act was to marry the grand-daughter of the Byzantine co-Emperor, Romanus I Lecapenus, thus introducing for the first time a Greek Tsaritsa into the Bulgarian court. He obtained by this marriage the recognition of his imperial title and of the Bulgarian Patriarchate. But the war-party in Bulgaria, headed by the Tsar's younger brother John, revolted against what they considered a policy of concession to the Greeks; and, when John was defeated, Simeon's eldest son emerged from his cell to lead a fresh rebellion. Upon his death, a far more serious opponent arose in the person of the noble, Shishman of Trnovo, and his sons. Shishman separated Macedonia and Albania from old Bulgaria, and established a second Bulgarian Empire in the western provinces. Torn asunder by these rivalries, Bulgaria was also menaced by her neighbours, the Serbs, the Patzinaks, and the Magyars, while the Bogomile heresy spread through the land from the two parent Churches of the Bulgarians proper and of the Macedonian or Thracian Dragovitchi. In Bulgaria, as in Bosnia, the Bogomile tenets aroused vehement opposition, the leader of which was the presbyter Cosmas. Apart from their beliefs, the Bogomiles, by the mere fact of dividing the nation into two contending religious factions, weakened its unity and prepared the way for the Turkish conquest. Even to-day the name of the *Babuni*, as the Bulgarian Bogomiles were called, lingers in the Babuna mountains near Prilep, the scene of fighting between the Bulgarians and the Allies in the late war. Simultaneously with this important religious and social movement there arose a race of ascetic hermits, of whom the chief, John of Rila, became the patron saint of Bulgaria.

¹ Leo Diaconus, 124. Gibbon confused the site of this battle with the classic river Achelous.

Native of a village near Sofia and a simple herdsman, he lived for twenty years now in the hollow of an oak, now in a cave of the Rila mountains, an hour's climb above the famous monastery which bears his name. Here the pious Tsar Peter visited him, and here he died in 946. His body was removed by Peter to Sofia, but restored to Rila in 1469.

The last years of Peter's weak reign coincided with the great revival of Byzantine military power upon the accession of Nicephorus II Phocas. The Bulgarians had the tactlessness to demand from the conqueror of Crete, just returned from his triumphs in Asia, "the customary tribute" which Byzantium had paid to the strong Tsar Simeon. The victorious Emperor—so the historian of his reign¹ informs us—"although not easily moved to anger," was so greatly incensed at this impertinent demand that he raised his voice and exclaimed that "the Greeks must, indeed, be in a sorry plight, if, after defeating every enemy in arms, they were to pay tribute like slaves to a race of Scythians, poor and filthy to boot." Suiting the action to the word, he ordered the envoys to be beaten, and bade them tell their master that the most mighty Emperor of the Romans would forthwith visit his country and pay the tribute in person. When, however, the soldierly Emperor had seen with his own eyes what a difficult country Bulgaria was, he thought it imprudent to expose his own army to the risks which had befallen his namesake and predecessor in the Balkan passes. He therefore contented himself with taking a few frontier-forts, and invited the Russians, on payment of a subvention, to invade Bulgaria from the north and settle permanently there. Svyatoslav, the Russian Prince, was only too delighted to undertake this task. He landed in 967 at the mouth of the Danube, drove the Bulgarians back into Silistria, and took many of their towns. This Russian success made Nicephorus reflect that a Russian Bulgaria might be more dangerous to Constantinople than a weak native state—the same argument led to the Berlin treaty—so he offered to help the Bulgarians to expel his Russian allies, and requested that two Bulgarian princesses should be sent to Byzantium to be affianced to the sons of the late Emperor Romanus, one of whom was destined to be "the slayer of the Bulgarians." Peter sent the princesses and his two sons as hostages, but his death, the assassination of Nicephorus, and the withdrawal of the Russians in 969, menaced by the Patzinaks at home, ended this episode. The biblically-named sons of Shishman—David, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel—endeavoured to avail themselves of the absence of the lawful heir, Boris II, to reunite eastern and western Bulgaria under their dynasty, but the arrival of Boris frustrated their attempt. It was reserved for the new Byzantine Emperor, John I Tzimisce, to end the eastern Bulgarian Empire.

Svyatoslav had been so greatly charmed with the riches and fertility of Bulgaria that he returned there, no longer as a Byzantine ally but on his own account, preferring, as he said, to establish his throne on the

¹ Leo Diaconus, 61-63, 77-80; Cedrenus, II. 372.

Danube rather than at Kiev. He captured the Bulgarian capital and the Tsar, crossed the Balkans, took and impaled the inhabitants of Philippopolis, and bade the Greek government either pay him compensation or leave Europe. The warlike Armenian who sat on the Greek throne invaded Bulgaria in 971, traversed the unguarded Balkan passes, took Great Prêslav, and released Boris and his family from Russian captivity, saying that he had "come to avenge the Bulgarians for what they had suffered from the Russians." But when Silistria, the last Russian stronghold, fell, and the Russians had evacuated Bulgaria, Tzimisces deposed Boris and the Bulgarian Patriarch, and annexed eastern Bulgaria to the Byzantine Empire. Boris was compelled to divest himself of his regalia, and received a Byzantine court title; his brother was made an eunuch. Great Prêslav was rebaptized Ioannópolis after its conqueror; the eastern Bulgarian Empire was at an end. Western Bulgaria under the sons of Shishman remained, however, independent for 47 years longer. Of these four sons, the so-called *Comitopouloi* (or "Young Counts"), David was killed by some wandering Wallachs, Moses was slain while besieging Seres, and Aaron with most of his family was executed for his Greek sympathies by his remaining brother Samuel, who thus became sole Bulgarian Tsar. His realm, at the period of its greatest extent (before the Greek campaigns of 1000-1002), included a considerable part of Danubian Bulgaria, with the towns of Great Prêslav, Vidin, and Sofia, and much of Serbia and Albania, but was essentially Macedonian, and his capital, after a brief residence at Sofia, was moved to Moglena, Vodená, and Prespa (where an island in the lake still preserves the name of his "castle"), and finally to the lake of Ochrida, the swamps of which he drained by 100 canals into the river Drin.

Upon the death of Tzimisces in 976, the Bulgarians rose; both Boris II and his brother, Roman, escaped from Constantinople, but the former was shot by a Bulgarian in mistake for a Greek, while the latter, being harmless, received a post from Samuel, who overran Thrace, the country round Salonica, and Thessaly, and carried off from Larissa to his capital at Prespa the remains of St Achilleus, Bishop of Larissa in the time of Constantine the Great. The ruined monastery of the island of Ahil in the lake still preserves the memory of this translation. Samuel even marched into continental Greece and threatened the Peloponnese, but was recalled by the news that the young Emperor Basil II had invaded Bulgaria. The first of his Bulgarian campaigns, that of 981, ended, however, ingloriously for the future conqueror of the Bulgarians. Whilst on his way to besiege Sofia, he was defeated at Shtiponye near Ikhtiman and with difficulty escaped to Philippopolis. Fifteen years of peace between the hereditary enemies ensued, which Samuel employed in making war upon John Vladimir, the saintly Serbian Prince of Dioclea, in ravaging Dalmatia, and in occupying Durazzo. Bulgaria thus for a brief space—for Durazzo was soon recovered by the Greeks—became an

Adriatic power. The Serbian prince, carried captive to Prespa, won the heart of Samuel's daughter Kosara, who begged her father to release him and allow her to marry him. Samuel not only consented, but allowed him to return and rule over his conquered land.

In 996 began the second war between Basil II and the Bulgarians. Basil, free at last from the cares of the civil wars, had appointed Taronites governor of Salonica for the special purpose of checking Samuel's raids. The new governor, however, fell with his son into a Bulgarian ambush and was killed; whereupon Basil sent Nicephorus Uranus to take his place. Meanwhile Samuel, elated at his success, had marched again through the vale of Tempe as far as the Peloponnese, ravaging and plundering as he went. But this time he was not to return unscathed. On his way back Uranus waited for him on the bank of the swollen Spercheus, and, crossing in the night, fell upon the sleeping Bulgarian soldiers, who had believed it impossible to ford the river. Samuel and his son, Gabriel Radomir Roman, were wounded and only escaped capture by lying as if dead among the corpses which strewed the field, fleeing, when it was dark, to the passes of Pindus. From that moment Samuel's fortune turned. His next loss was that of Durazzo, betrayed to the Greeks by his father-in-law, the chief man of the place, and by the captive son of Taronites, who had obtained the affections of another of the Tsar's susceptible daughters, and had been allowed to marry her and had received a command at that important position. The Greeks everywhere took the offensive. In 1000 they entered and again subdued Danubian Bulgaria, taking Great and Little Prěslav and Pliska, which is now mentioned after a long interval. Next year Basil cleared the Bulgarian garrisons out of the south Macedonian towns of Berrhoea, Servia, and Vodená, and out of the Thessalian castles, removing them to Voloeros at the mouth of the Maritza. To this campaign we owe the first description, which enlivens the prose of Cedrenus¹, of the waterfall of Vodená—the Tivoli of Macedonia. In 1002 Vidin and Skoplje fell, and Samuel, believing that the Vardar could not be crossed, once again nearly became the prisoner of the Greeks. Hostilities dragged on, and Basil for the next twelve years annually invaded the western Bulgarian Empire, which was now reduced to part of Macedonia, Albania, and the mountains round Sofia. But in 1014 the third and last Bulgarian war of the reign broke out. On 29 July Nicephorus Xiphias turned the strong Bulgarian position of Kleidíon ("the key") in the Struma valley, near the scene of King Constantine's victories over the Bulgarians 900 years later. Samuel escaped, thanks to his son's assistance, to Prilep, but Basil blinded the 15,000 Bulgarian captives, leaving one man in every hundred with one eye, so that he might guide his totally blinded comrades to tell the tale to the fugitive Tsar. Samuel fainted at the ghastly sight and two days later expired.

The western Bulgarian Empire survived him only four years. His

¹ II. 436, 447, 449-56.

son, Gabriel Roman, by a captive from Larissa succeeded him, but excelled him in physique alone. Barely a year later Gabriel was murdered by his cousin John Vladislav, Aaron's son, whose life he had begged his father to spare when Aaron and the rest of his family were put to death. The ungrateful wretch likewise assassinated his cousin's wife, blinded her eldest son, and invited the Serbian Prince, John Vladimir, to be his guest at Prespa and there had him beheaded. Having thus removed all possible rivals in his own family, the new Tsar began to treat with Basil, whose vassal he offered to become. Basil, mistrusting the murderer, marched upon his capital of Ochrida, blinding all the Bulgarians whom he took prisoners on the way. He captured Ochrida and was on his way to relieve Durazzo, which was invested by the Bulgarians, when a sudden defeat, inflicted upon a detachment of his army by the Bulgarian noble, Ivats, caused him to retire on Salonica. The Bulgarians continued to make a vigorous defence of their difficult country; Pernik successfully resisted a siege of 88 days; the Tsar even endeavoured to make an alliance with the Patzinaks from beyond the Danube against the Greeks. But he fell by an unknown hand while besieging Durazzo in 1018. Bulgaria, left without a head, was divided into two parties—one, headed by the widowed Tsaritsa Maria, the Patriarch David, and Bogdan, "the commander of the inner fortresses"; the other and weaker party, led by the late Tsar's son Fruyin, and the soldierly Ivats. Upon the news of the Tsar's death, Basil marched into Bulgaria to complete the subjection of the country. At Strumitsa the Patriarch met him with a letter from the Tsaritsa, offering on certain conditions to surrender Bulgaria. Bogdan was rewarded with a Byzantine title for his treachery, and then the Emperor proceeded to Ochrida, where he confiscated the rich treasury of the Tsars. In his camp outside there waited upon him the Tsaritsa with her six daughters and three of her sons, a bastard son of Samuel, and the five sons and two daughters of Gabriel Radomir Roman. The conqueror received her kindly, as well as the notables who made their submission. Her three other sons, however, of whom Fruyin was the most prominent, had fled to Mt. Tomor near Berat, where they endeavoured to maintain the independence of Bulgaria in the Albanian highlands, while Ivats held out in his castle of Pronishta in the same mountainous region. The young princes, however, were forced to surrender and compensated with court titles; the brave Ivats was treacherously seized and blinded. The last two nobles who still held out then surrendered. After nearly 40 years of fighting, Bulgaria was subdued.

The "Bulgar-slayer," as Basil II is known in history, celebrated his triumph in the noblest of all existing churches, the majestic Parthenon, then Our Lady of Athens. On his march he gazed upon the bleaching bones of the Bulgarians who had fallen by the Spercheus twenty-two years before, and upon the walls erected in the pass of Thermopylae to repel their invasions. The great cathedral he enriched with offerings out of

the Bulgarian treasury, and 900 years later the Athenians were reminded of his triumph there. Thence he returned to Constantinople, where the ex-Tsaritsa, Samuel's daughters, and the rest of the Bulgarians were led through the Golden Gate before him.

BULGARIA A BYZANTINE PROVINCE (1018-1186).

Bulgaria remained for 168 years a Byzantine province. Her nobles had lost their leaders, her princes and princesses had disappeared amidst the pompous functionaries of the Byzantine Court. Only her Church remained autonomous, but that only on condition that the Patriarchate, which during the period of the western Bulgarian Empire had had its seat successively at Vodená, Prespa, and finally at Ochrida, was reduced to the rank of an Archbishopric. In 1020 Basil II issued three charters¹ confirming the rights of "the Archbishop of Bulgaria"—the additional title of "Justiniana Prima" was added in 1157—whose residence continued to be at Ochrida, whither it had been moved by Simeon. He expressly maintained intact the rights and area of its jurisdiction as it had been in the times of both Peter and Samuel, which therefore included 30 bishoprics and towns, such as Ochrida, Kastoria, Monastir, and Skoplje in Macedonia; Sofia and Vidin in old Bulgaria; Belgrade, Niš, Prizren, and Rasa in what is now Yugoslavia; Canina (above Avlona), Cheimarra, Butrinto, and Joánnina in South Albania and Northern Epirus; and Stagi (the modern Kalabaka) in Thessaly. We may therefore safely assume that in the palmy days of Peter and of Samuel these places were included within their respective Empires. In 1020 these thirty bishoprics contained 685 ecclesiastics and 655 serfs. But after Basil II's reign the number of the suffragans was reduced practically to what it had been in the time of Samuel, and after the first archbishop no more Bulgarians were appointed to the see of Ochrida during the Byzantine period. The head of the autonomous Bulgarian Church was always a Greek and often a priest from St Sophia itself, except on one occasion when a Jew was nominated, and the list includes the distinguished theologian and letter-writer, Theophylact of Euboea, who felt as an exile his separation from culture in the wilds of Bulgaria, and John Camaterus, afterwards Ecumenical Patriarch at the time of the Latin conquest of Constantinople. The Bogomile heresy made great progress during this period, especially round Philippopolis, despite its persecution by the Emperor Alexius I. For the civil and military administration of Bulgaria a new (Bulgarian) theme was created under a Pronoetes² and also a duchy of Paristrum, while the neighbouring themes had their territory enlarged. The various governors, holding office usually for only a year, made as much out of their districts as possible in the customary Oriental fashion; but the local communities retained a considerable measure of autonomy, and we

¹ BZ. II. 40-72.

² Cf. *infra*, Chapter XXIII, p. 733.

are expressly told that Basil left the taxes as they had been in the time of Samuel, payable in kind.

The Bulgarians did not, however, remain inactive during this long period of Byzantine rule. A succession of weak rulers and court intrigues followed the death of Basil "the Bulgar-slayer." The Bulgarian prince Fruyin, and his mother the ex-Tsaritsa, were mixed up in these intrigues, both imprisoned in monasteries, and the former blinded. In 1040 a more serious movement arose. Simultaneous insurrections broke out among the Serbs of what is now Montenegro and the Bulgarians, who found a leader in a certain Peter Delyan, who gave himself out to be a son of the Tsar Gabriel Radomir Roman. Greeted enthusiastically as Tsar, he had the country at his feet, so lively was the memory of the old dynasty. But a rival appeared in the person of the warlike Tikhomir, who was acclaimed Tsar by the Slavs of Durazzo. Delyan invited his rival and the Bulgarians that were with him to a meeting, at which he told them that "one bush could not nourish two redbreasts," and bade them choose between Tikhomir and the grandson of Samuel, promising to abide loyally by their decision. Loud applause greeted his speech; the people stoned Tikhomir and proclaimed Delyan their sole sovereign. He marched upon Salonica, whence the Emperor Michael IV the Paphlagonian fled, while his chamberlain, Ivats, perhaps a son of the Bulgarian patriot, went over with his war chest to the insurgents. One Bulgarian army took Durazzo; another invaded Greece and defeated the imperial forces before Thebes; the entire province of Nicopolis (except Naupactus) joined the Bulgarians, infuriated at the exactions of the Byzantine tax-collector and at the substitution, by the unpopular finance minister, John, the Emperor's brother, of cash payments for payments in kind. But another Bulgarian leader now appeared in the person of Alusian, younger brother of the Tsar John Vladislav, and Delyan's cousin, whom the grasping minister's greed had also driven to revolt. Delyan wisely offered to share the first place with this undoubted scion of the stock of Shishman—for his own claims to the blood royal were impugned. But a great defeat of the Bulgarians before Salonica, which was ascribed to the intervention of that city's patron saint, St Demetrius, led to recriminations and suspicions. Alusian invited his rival to a banquet, made him drunk, and blinded him. The double-dyed traitor then betrayed his country to the Emperor, the revolt was speedily crushed, and Delyan and Ivats were led in triumph to Constantinople.

Another Bulgarian rising took place in 1073, and from the same cause—the exactions of the imperial treasury, which continued to ignore the wise practice of Basil II and the lessons of the last rebellion. Having no prominent leader of their own to put on the throne, the Bulgarian chiefs begged Michael, first King of the Serbian state of Dioclea, to send them his son, Constantine Bodin, whom they proclaimed "Tsar of the Bulgarians" at Prizren under the popular name of Peter, formerly

borne by Simeon's saintly son. But there was a party among the Bulgarians hostile to what was doubtless regarded as a foreign movement; the insurgents made the mistake, after their initial successes, of dividing their forces, and were defeated at Paun ("the peacock" castle) on the historic field of Kossovo, where Bodin was taken prisoner. Frankish mercenaries in Byzantine employ completed the destruction by burning down the palace of the Tsars on the island in the lake of Prespa and sacking the church of St Achilleus. Worse still were the frequent raids of the Patzinaks and Cumans, while Macedonia was the theatre of the Norman invasion. But, except for occasional and quickly suppressed risings of Bulgarians and Bogomiles, there was no further serious insurrection for over 100 years. Under the Comnenian dynasty the Bulgarians were better governed, and they lacked local leaders to face a series of energetic Emperors.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BALKAN STATES.

I. THE ZENITH OF BULGARIA AND SERBIA (1186-1355).

THE close of the twelfth century witnessed the birth of Slavonic independence in the Balkan peninsula. The death of Manuel I in 1180 freed the Southern Slavs from the rule of Byzantium, and in the following decade were laid the foundations of those Serbian, Bosnian, and Bulgarian states which, after a brief period of splendour acquired at the expense of one or other Christian nationality, fell before the all-conquering Turk to rise again in modified form and on a smaller scale in our own time. As has usually happened in the history of the Balkans, the triumph of the nation was in each case the work of some powerful personality, of Stephen Nemanja in Serbia, of Kulin in Bosnia, and of the brothers Peter and John Asën in Bulgaria.

The founder of the Serbian monarchy was a native of the Zeta, the older Serbian kingdom of Dioclea and the modern Montenegro. Starting from his birthplace on the banks of the Ribnica, Nemanja made Rascia, later the *Sanjak* of Novibazar, the nucleus of a great Serbian state, which comprised the Zeta and the land of Hum, as the Herzegovina was then called, with outlets to the sea on the Bocche di Cattaro and at Antivari, North Albania with Scutari, Old Serbia, and the modern kingdom before 1913 as far as the Morava. Of the Serbian lands Bosnia alone evaded his sway, for there his kinsman Kulin, ignoring the authority alike of the Hungarian crown and of the Byzantine Empire, governed with the title of *ban* a rich and extensive country, then "at least a ten days' journey in circumference," and became the first great figure in Bosnian history, whose reign was regarded centuries afterwards as the golden age. Italian painters and goldsmiths found occupation in his territory, and Ragusans exploited its trade. Miroslav, Nemanja's brother and Kulin's brother-in-law, whom the former made prince of the land of Hum, formed the link between these two separate yet kindred Serbian communities.

Before the time of Nemanja the chiefs of the various Serbian districts, or *župy*, who were thence styled *župans*, had considered themselves as practically independent in their own dominions, merely acknowledging the more or less nominal supremacy of one of their number, the so-called

"Great *Župan*." Nemanja, while retaining this traditional title, converted the aristocratic federation as far as possible into a single state, whose head in the next generation took the corresponding name of king. Further, to strengthen his position with the majority of his people, he embraced the Orthodox faith, and endeavoured to promote ecclesiastical no less than political unity. With this object he laboured to extirpate the Bogomile or Manichaean heresy, which was then rife in the Balkan lands and had attained special prominence in Bosnia. The simple worship of the Bogomiles, the Puritans of south-eastern Europe, was sometimes encouraged and sometimes proscribed by the Bosnian rulers, according as they wished to oppose the pretensions, or invoke the aid, of the Papacy. Thus Kulin at one time found it expedient to join the Bogomile communion with his wife, his sister, and several other members of his family, whose example was followed by more than 10,000 of his subjects; while at another, the threat of Hungarian intervention, supported by the greatest of the Popes, led him to recant his errors. On 8 April 1203 the *ban* and the chief Bogomiles met the papal legate on the "white plain" by the river Bosna, and renounced their heretical practices and beliefs. The oldest Bosnian inscription tells us how Kulin and his wife proved the sincerity of their re-conversion by restoring a church¹. While Kulin thus ended his career as a devout Roman Catholic, Nemanja, at the instigation of his youngest son, the saintly Sava, retired from the world in 1196 to the monastery of Studenica, which he had founded, leaving to his second son Stephen the bulk of his dominions with the dignity of "Great *Župan*," and to his eldest son Vukan his native Zeta as an appanage, a proof that the unification of the Serbian monarchy was not yet completely accomplished. From Studenica he moved to Mount Athos, where, on 13 February 1200, he died as the monk Simeon in his humble cell at Chiliandaron. After his death he received the honours of a saint, and his tomb is still revered in his monastery of Studenica. Just as the lineage of the *ban* Kulin is said to linger on in the Bosnian family of Kulenović, just as later rulers regarded the customs and frontiers of his time as a standard for their own, so the Serbs look back to Nemanja as the author of the dynasty with which their medieval glories alike in Church and State are indissolubly connected.

Meanwhile, in 1186, a third Slavonic nation had asserted its independence of the Byzantine Empire. The unwise imposition of taxes to furnish forth the wedding festivities of the Emperor Isaac II Angelus aroused the discontent of the Bulgarians and Wallachs (Vlachs) of the Balkans. The rebels found leaders in the brothers Peter and John Asên, descendants of the old Bulgarian Tsars, who summoned the hesitating to a meeting in the chapel of St Demetrius which they had built at Trnovo, and by means of a pious fraud persuaded them that

¹ *Wissenschaftliche Mittheilungen*, vii. 215-20.

the saint had migrated thither from his desecrated church at Salonica, and that providence had decreed the freedom of Bulgaria. Peter at the outset assumed the imperial symbols and the style of "Emperor of the Bulgarians and Greeks"; but his bolder brother soon took the first place, while he contented himself with the former capital of Prêslav and its region, which in the next century still bore the name of "Peter's country." Three Byzantine commanders in vain strove to stamp out the insurrection: John Asên, driven beyond the Danube, returned at the head of a body of Cumans, the warlike race which then occupied what is now Roumania; Nemanja availed himself of the Bulgarian rebellion to extend his dominions to the south; and the Serbian and Bulgarian rulers alike hoped to find in Frederick Barbarossa, then on his way across the Balkan peninsula to the Holy Land, a supporter of their designs. Isaac Angelus barely escaped with his life near Stara Zagora; the victorious Bulgarians captured Sofia, and carried off the remains of their national patron, St John of Rila, in triumph to their capital of Trnovo. Such was the contempt of the brothers Asên for their former masters that they rejected the terms of peace offered them by the new Emperor, Alexius III, and advanced into Macedonia. But, in the midst of their successes, two of those crimes of violence so common in all ages in the Balkans removed both the founders of the second Bulgarian Empire. John Asên I was slain by one of his nobles, a certain Ivanko, after a nine years' reign; the assassin temporarily occupied Trnovo and summoned a Byzantine army to his aid; but Peter associated with himself his younger brother Kalojan, and carried on the government of the Empire until, a year later, he too fell by the hand of one of his fellow-countrymen, and Kalojan reigned alone as "Emperor of the Bulgarians and Wallachs."

The new Tsar continued to extend his dominions at the expense of his neighbours: from the Greeks he captured Varna in the east, from the Serbs, divided among themselves by a fratricidal struggle between the two elder sons of Nemanja, he took Niš in the west; his Empire extended as far south as Skoplje, as far north as the Danube, while his relative, the savage Strêz, held the impregnable rock of Prosêk in the valley of the Vardar as an independent prince. Thus, on the eve of the Latin conquest, Bulgaria had suddenly become the most vigorous element in the Balkan peninsula, while Serbia lay dismembered by the disunion of her reigning family and the foreign intervention which it produced. For Vukan, not content with his appanage in the Zeta, had invoked the aid of the Pope and the Hungarians in his struggle to oust his brother from the Serbian throne; King Emeric of Hungary occupied a large part of Serbia in 1202, with the object of allowing Vukan to govern it as his vassal, while he himself assumed the style of "King of Rascia," as his predecessors had long before assumed that of "King of Rama" from a Bosnian river—two titles which ever

since then remained attached to the Hungarian crown. His brother had already made the subsequent Herzegovina a Hungarian duchy, and Bosnia was only saved from premature absorption by Kulin's politic conversion to Catholicism. Even the Bulgarian Tsar was treated as a usurper by the proud Hungarian monarch whose newly-won Serbian dependency he had dared to devastate.

Menaced alike by his Hungarian neighbour and by the new Latin Empire, which had now arisen at Constantinople and which claimed authority over his dominions as the heir of the Greeks, Kalojan thought it prudent, like other Slav rulers, to obtain the protection of the Papacy. He begged Innocent III to give him an imperial diadem and a Patriarch; the diplomatic Pope sent him a royal crown and ordered his cardinal legate to consecrate the Archbishop of Trnovo as "Primate of all Bulgaria and Wallachia"; two archbishops and four bishops completed the Bulgarian hierarchy, and on 8 November 1204 Kalojan was crowned by the cardinal at Trnovo.

But the crafty Bulgarian was not restrained by respect for the Papacy from attacking the Latins as soon as occasion offered. His old enemies the Greeks of Thrace, who had at first welcomed the erection of Philippopolis into a Flemish duchy for Renier de Trit, speedily offered to recognise Kalojan as Emperor if he would aid them against their new masters. He gladly accepted their offer, and soon the heads of some thirty Frankish knights testified to the savagery of the Bulgarian Tsar. The Latin Emperor Baldwin I set out with Count Louis of Blois to suppress the rebellion and relieve the isolated Duke of Philippopolis. On 14 April 1205 a decisive battle was fought before Hadrianople. The Count of Blois was killed; Baldwin fell into the hands of the Bulgarian victor. Even now the end of the first Latin Emperor of Constantinople is not known with certainty. Two months after the battle he was reported to be still alive and treated as a prisoner of distinction. But he soon fell a victim to the rage of his barbarous captor. Nicetas tells us that the desertion of the Greeks of Thrace to the Latins infuriated Kalojan, who vented his indignation on his prisoner, ordered his hands and feet to be cut off, and then cast him headlong into a ravine, where on the third day he expired. A Flemish priest, however, who was passing through Trnovo, heard a Bulgarian version of the story of Potiphar's wife, according to which the virtuous Baldwin was sacrificed to the injured pride of Kalojan's passionate Cuman consort, and cut down in the presence of the Tsar. Twenty years later a false Baldwin was hanged in Flanders, and tradition attaches the name of the first Latin Emperor to a ruined tower of the medieval Bulgarian capital.

Kalojan did not long survive his victim. For a time his career was a series of unbroken successes over Franks and Greeks alike. Renier de Trit was driven from Philippopolis; King Boniface of Salonica was slain in a Bulgarian ambush and his head sent to the Tsar; so fatal were

Kalojan's raids to the native population that he styled himself "the slayer of the Greeks," and they called him "the dog John." He was about to attack Salonica in the autumn of 1207, when pleurisy, or more probably a palace revolution prompted by his faithless wife, ended his life. The popular imagination ascribed the deed to St Demetrius, the patron-saint of the city, but the usurpation of the dead Tsar's nephew Boril and his speedy marriage with the widowed Empress pointed to the real authors of the deed. Kalojan's lawful heir, his son John Asên II, fled to Russia, while Boril reigned at Trnovo. At first he pursued his predecessor's policy of attacking the Franks, only to receive a severe defeat near Philippopolis. Later on, we find him receiving the visit of a cardinal sent him by the Pope, persecuting the Bogomiles as the Serbian and Bosnian rulers had done, doubtless for the same reason, and marrying his daughter to his former enemy, the Latin Emperor Henry, a striking proof of the growing importance of Bulgaria. But there was a large party which had remained faithful to the legitimate Tsar; John Asên II returned with a band of Russians and besieged the usurper in his capital. Trnovo long resisted but, at last, in 1218 Boril was captured while attempting to escape, and blinded by his conqueror's orders.

A year earlier Serbia had been raised to the dignity of a kingdom. The Hungarian monarchs, occupied elsewhere, could no longer interfere in the domestic quarrels of the Serbs. Sava reconciled his brothers and persuaded the ambitious Vukan, the self-styled "King of Dioclea and Dalmatia," to recognise Stephen's right to the position of "Great *Župan*." An Italian marriage, the example of Bulgaria, the desire of papal support, and the absence of the jealous King of Hungary in Palestine, prompted Stephen to ask the Pope once more for a royal crown, an act for which the negotiations of the Serbian ruler of Dioclea with Gregory VII furnished a precedent. In 1217 Honorius III sent a legate to perform the coronation, and the "first-crowned" King "of all Serbia" connected himself with the former royal line by styling himself also "King of Dioclea," adding Dalmatia and the land of Hum as a flourish to his other titles. But it has always been a dangerous experiment for a Balkan ruler to purchase the political support of the Western Church, at the risk of alienating the Eastern, to which the majority of his subjects belong. The King of Serbia recognised his mistake; his brother Sava availed himself of the critical position of the Greek Empire of Nicaea to obtain from the Ecumenical Patriarch, who then resided there, his own consecration in 1219 as "Archbishop of all the Serbian lands" together with the creation of a separate Serbian Church; and on his return home he crowned Stephen in 1222 in the church of Žiža, which the "first-crowned" king and his eldest son had founded, and which remains to our own day the coronation church of the Serbian kings. Thanks to Sava's influence the anger of the King of Hungary at

this assumption of a royal crown was averted; and, when Stephen died in 1228, his eldest son Radoslav succeeded to his title. But the second King of Serbia was of weak character and feeble understanding. His next brother Vladislav, a man of more energy, was a dangerous rival; public opinion favoured the latter; Radoslav became a monk, and Vladislav in turn was crowned by the reluctant Sava. Together the new king and the archbishop built the monastery of Mileševo in the *Sanjak* of Novibazar, where their bones' were laid to rest. St Sava's memory is still held in reverence by the Serbs as the founder of their national Church; many a pious legend has grown up around his name, but through the haze of romance and beneath the halo of the saint we can descry the figure of the great ecclesiastical statesman whose constant aim it was to benefit the country and the dynasty to which he himself belonged, and to identify the latter with the national religion.

One of Sava's last acts had been to promote a matrimonial alliance between the Serbian and the Bulgarian courts, and it was at Trnovo, then the centre of Balkan politics, that he died. Under John Asên II the second Bulgarian Empire attained its zenith, and became for a time the strongest power in the peninsula. The Latin Empire of Constantinople was already growing weaker; the vigorous Greek Empire of Salonica, which had arisen on the ruins of the Latin kingdom of the same name, received from the Bulgarian Tsar a crushing blow at the battle of Klokotinitza in 1230, and its Emperor, Theodore Angelus, became his captive; the new Emperor Manuel had married one of his daughters; the King of Serbia had married another; his own wife was a daughter of the King of Hungary. Of the two Bulgarian princelings who had made themselves independent of his predecessors in Macedonia, Strêz of Prosêk had long before died a violent death, in which the superstitious saw the hand of St Sava; Slav of Melnik, who had played fast and loose alike with Latins, Greeks, and Bulgarians, had been swallowed up in the Greek Empire of Salonica. On a pillar of the church of the Forty Martyrs, which he built in 1230 at Trnovo, the Tsar placed an inscription, still preserved, in which he boasted that he had "captured the Emperor Theodore" and "conquered all the lands from Hadrianople to Durazzo, the Greek, the Albanian, and the Serbian land." His mild and statesmanlike demeanour endeared him to the various nationalities included in his wide dominions; even a Greek historian admits that he was beloved by the Greeks (a very rare achievement for a Bulgarian), while a Bulgarian monk praises his piety, his generous ecclesiastical foundations, and his restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchate. During the first Bulgarian Empire the Patriarch had resided first at Prêslav and then at Ochrida. When that Empire fell, the Greeks reduced the Patriarchate to an Archbishopric; and,

¹ Those of St Sava were burned by the Turks at Vraçar in 1595 (*Arch. f. slav. Philologie*, xxviii. 90-93).

when the second Empire arose, the Pope, as we saw, could not be persuaded to grant more than the title of Primate to the Archbishop of Trnovo. In 1235, however, as the price of his aid against the Latins of Constantinople, John Asên II obtained from the Emperor Vatatzes of Nicaea and the Ecumenical Patriarch the recognition of the autonomy of the Bulgarian Church and the revival of the Bulgarian Patriarchate, whose seat thenceforth remained at Trnovo until the Turkish conquest placed the Bulgarian Church once more under the Greeks, from whom the creation of the Exarchate in 1870 has again emancipated it.

But John Asên II did not confine his energies to politics and religion. Like his contemporaries in Serbia, Bosnia, and the adjacent land of Hum, he granted to the Ragusan merchants, who during a large part of the Middle Ages had the chief carrying-trade of the Balkan peninsula in their hands, permission to do business freely in his realm. He called these intermediaries between Italy and the East his "dear guests," and they repaid the compliment by recalling his "true friendship." Gold, silver, richly-worked garments, and salt entered the Bulgarian Empire through the medium of the South Slavonic commonwealth on the Adriatic, while the centralisation of Church and State at Trnovo gave that city an importance which was lacking to the shifting Serbian capital, now at Novibazar, now at Priština, now at Prizren. There was the treasury, there dwelt the great nobles who occupied the court posts with their high-sounding Byzantine names, and there met the synods which denounced the Bogomiles and all their works. The stranger who visited the "castle of thorns" (Trnovo) on the festival of Our Lord's Baptism, when the Tsars were wont to display their greatest pomp, went away impressed with the splendour of their residence on the hill above the tortuous Jantra, a situation unique even among the romantic medieval capitals of the different Balkan races.

The conflict with the Greek Empire of Salonica had been forced upon the Tsar, and it was not till 1235 that he joined the Greek Emperor of Nicaea in an attack upon the Latins of Constantinople, of which the union of their children was to be the guarantee. In two successive campaigns the allies devastated what remained of the Latin Empire in Thrace, where the Frankish duchy of Philippopolis, then held by Gerard de Stroem, fell to the share of Asên, and they advanced to the walls of Constantinople. Defeated in the attempt to capture the Latin capital, the allies drifted apart; Asên saw that it was not his interest to help a strong Greek ruler to recover Byzantium; he removed his daughter from the court of Nicaea, and transferred his support to the Franks against his late ally. Suddenly the news that his wife, his son, and the Patriarch had all died filled him with remorse for his broken vows; he sent his daughter back, and made his peace with Vatatzes, a fact which did not prevent him from giving transit through Bulgaria to a Frankish relief force on its way to Constantinople. His last acts were

to marry the fair daughter of the old Emperor Theodore of Salonica, whom he had previously blinded, and then to aid his blind captive to recover Salonica. In the following year, 1241, on or about the feast of his patron saint, St John, the great Tsar died, leaving his vast Empire to his son Kaliman, a lad of seven.

The golden age of Bulgaria under the rule of John Asên II was followed by a period of rapid decline. Kaliman I was well-advised to renew the alliance with the Greek Emperor of Nicaea and to make truce with the Franks of Constantinople. But his youth and inexperience allowed Vatatzes to become the arbiter of the tottering Empire of Salonica, and his sudden death in 1246, at a moment when that ambitious ruler chanced to be in Thrace, tempted the latter to attack the defenceless Bulgarian dominions. Kaliman's sudden end was ascribed by evil tongues to poison; but, whether accidental or no, it could not have happened at a more unfavourable moment for his country. Michael Asên, his younger brother, who succeeded him, was still a child; the Empress-mother, who assumed the regency, was a foreigner and a Greek; and the most powerful monarch of the Orient was at the head of an army on the frontier. One after another John Asên's conquests collapsed before the invading forces of Vatatzes. The Rhodope and a large part of Macedonia, as well as the remains of the Greek Empire of Salonica, formed a European appendage of the Empire of Nicaea, while at Prilep, Pelagonia, and Ochrida, the Nicene frontier now marched with that of another vigorous Greek state, the despotat of Epirus. In the south old blind Theodore Angelus still retained a small territory; thus Hellenism was once more the predominant force in Macedonia, while the new Bulgarian Tsar was forced to submit to the loss of half his dominions.

So long as Vatatzes lived, it was impossible to think of attempting their reconquest. But in 1253 a quarrel between the Ragusans, his father's "dear guests," and the adjacent kingdom of Serbia, seemed to offer an opportunity to Michael Asên for obtaining compensation from his fellow-Slavs for his losses at the hands of the Greeks. A coalition was formed between the merchant-statesmen of Ragusa, their neighbour, the *Župan* of Hum, and the Bulgarian Tsar, against Stephen Uroš I, who had ousted, or at least succeeded, his still living¹ brother Vladislav in 1243. It was agreed that, in the event of a Bulgarian conquest of Serbia, the Ragusans should retain all the privileges granted them by the Serbian kings, while they promised never to receive Stephen Uroš or his brother, should they seek refuge there. The King of Serbia, however, came to terms with the Ragusans at once, and Michael Asên's scheme of expansion was abandoned. One result was the removal of the Serbian ecclesiastical residence to Ipek.

When, however, Vatatzes died in the following year, the young Tsar

¹ Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica*, 35, 561.

thought that the moment had come to recover from the new Emperor of Nicaea, Theodore II Lascaris, what the Greeks had captured. At first his efforts proved successful; the Slavonic element in the population of Thrace declared for him; and the Rhodope was temporarily restored to Bulgaria. But his triumph over his brother-in-law was not for long; the castles of the Rhodope were speedily retaken; in vain the mountain-fastness of Chêpina held out against the Greek troops; in vain the Tsar summoned a body of Cumans to his aid; he was glad to accept the mediation of his father-in-law, the Russian prince Rostislav¹, then a prominent figure in Balkan politics, and to make peace on such terms as he could. Chêpina was evacuated; the Bulgarian frontier receded to the line which had bounded it before this futile war. The failure of his foreign policy naturally discontented Michael Asên's subjects. His cousin Kaliman with the connivance of some leading inhabitants of Trnovo, slew him outside its walls, seized the throne, and made himself master of the person of the widowed Empress. But Rostislav hastened to the rescue of his daughter, only to find that the usurper, fleeing for safety from place to place, had been slain by his own subjects. With the death of Kaliman II in 1257 the dynasty of Asên was extinct. Rostislav in vain styled himself "Emperor of the Bulgarians."

The nobles, or *boljare*, convoked a council for the election of a new Tsar. Their choice fell upon Constantine, a man of energy and ability settled near Sofia, but descended through the female line from the founder of the Serbian dynasty, whom he vaunted as his grandfather. In order to obtain some sort of hereditary right to the crown, he divorced his wife and married a daughter of Theodore II Lascaris, who, as the granddaughter of John Asên II, would make him the representative of the national line of Tsars. To complete his legitimacy, he took on his marriage the name of Asên. Another competitor, however, a certain Mytzês, who had married a daughter of John Asên II, claimed a closer connexion with that famous house, and for a time disputed the succession to the throne. But his weakness of character contrasted unfavourably with the manly qualities of Constantine; he had to take refuge in Mesembria, and by surrendering that city to the Greeks obtained from them a peaceful retreat for himself and his family near the site of Troy.

Constantine's marriage with a Greek princess had benefited him personally; but it soon proved a source of trouble to his country. The Tsaritsa, as the sister of the dethroned Greek Emperor John IV, nourished a natural resentment against the man who had usurped her brother's throne, and urged her husband to avenge him. Michael Palaeologus had, indeed, foreseen this effect of his policy; and in the winter before the recapture of Constantinople from the Latins, he had sent his trusty agent, the historian Acropolita, to Trnovo with

¹ *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, xxi. 622-6.

the object of securing the neutrality of the Tsar during the accomplishment of that great design. The re-establishment of the Greek Empire at Byzantium, which had been the goal of the Bulgarian Tsars, offended the national susceptibilities of the nobles, and a sovereign who owed his election to that powerful class and who was half a foreigner would naturally desire to shew himself more Bulgarian than the Bulgarians. Thus a conflict with the Greeks was inevitable. Its only result was the loss of all Bulgaria south of the Balkans.

Constantine Asën was also occupied in the early years after the recapture of Constantinople with resisting Hungarian invasions from the north. The Kings of Hungary had always resented the resurrection of the Bulgarian Empire and the independence of Bosnia; and the patronage of the Bogomile heresy by the rulers of both those countries gave them, as the champions of the Papacy, an excuse for intervention. The history of Bosnia during the half-century which followed the death of Kulin in 1204 mainly consists of Hungarian attempts to acquire the sovereignty over the country by means of its theological divisions. First the King of Hungary and the Pope granted Bosnia to the Hungarian Archbishop of Kalocsa, on condition that he purged the land of the "unbelievers" who infested it. Then, when the Bosniaks retorted by making Ninoslav, a born Bogomile, their *ban*, the king took the still stronger step of bestowing their country upon his son Koloman, who in 1237 made himself master of not only Bosnia but of Hum also. The great defeat of the Hungarians by the Tartars four years later temporarily rid Bosnia of Hungarian interference, and the Papacy tried concessions instead of crusades, allowing Ninoslav, now become a Catholic, to reign unmolested, and the priests to use the Slavonic tongue and the Glagolitic characters in the services of the Church. At last, however, in 1254 religious differences and a disputed succession caused both Bosnia and Hum to fall beneath Hungarian suzerainty. Bosnia was then divided into two parts; while the south was allowed to retain native *bans*, the north, for the sake of greater security against Bulgaria and Serbia, was at first entrusted to Hungarian magnates, and then combined with a large slice of northern Serbia, which under the name of the *banat* of Mačva was governed by the Russian prince Rostislav, whose name has been already mentioned in connexion with Bulgaria, and who, as son-in-law of the King of Hungary, could be trusted to carry out his policy. This enlarged (and in 1264 reunited) *banat* or duchy of Mačva and Bosnia, as it was officially called, thus formed, like Bosnia in our own time, an advanced post of Hungary in the Balkan peninsula.

Bulgaria was stronger and less exposed than Bosnia; but it was equally coveted by the Hungarian sovereigns. One of them had already assumed the title of "King of Bulgaria"; another, after a series of campaigns in which the Hungarian armies reached the walls

of Trnovo and temporarily captured the "virgin fortress" of Vidin, not only adopted the same style, but handed down to his successors a shadowy claim to the Bulgarian crown. Thus, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the Hungarian monarchs were pleased to style themselves "Kings of Bulgaria, Rascia, and Rama," sovereigns (on paper) of all the three South Slavonic States.

When the Hungarian invaders retired, Constantine Asên bethought him of revenge upon the Greeks. He did not scruple to call the Sultan of Iconium and the savage Tartars to his aid; Michael Palaeologus narrowly escaped capture at their hands, and it was long before the rich plain of Thrace recovered from their ravages. These exhausting campaigns caused the Greek Emperor to propitiate so active an enemy. Constantine's wife was now dead, and Michael VIII accordingly endeavoured to attach the Bulgarian Tsar to the new dynasty at Constantinople by offering him the hand of his own niece Maria, with Mesembria and another Black Sea port as her dowry. No sooner, however, had the marriage been celebrated than Michael refused to hand over those places, on the plea that their inhabitants, being Greeks, could not be fairly transferred to Bulgaria against their will. To his surprise, his niece, as soon as she had become a mother, threw in her lot entirely with her adopted country, and urged her husband to assert his claims. The Greek Emperor only avoided a Bulgarian invasion by another diplomatic marriage, that of his natural daughter to the powerful Tartar chief Nogai Khan, who from the steppes of southern Russia kept Bulgaria quiet.

The great design of Charles of Anjou, now established on the throne of Naples, for the recovery of the Latin Empire, affected both Bulgaria and Serbia. Stephen Uroš I had married a daughter of the exiled Latin Emperor Baldwin II, and Queen Helena, whose name is still preserved in the cathedral at Cattaro and in a ruined church on the river Bojana, played as important a part as the Bulgarian Empress in advocating an attack upon the Greeks. In vain the Greek Emperor tried to win over the Serbian monarch by a marriage between one of his daughters and a son of Stephen Uroš. But the pompous Byzantine envoys, who were ordered to report upon the manners and customs of the Serbian court, were horrified to find "the great" king, as he was called, living in a style which would have disgraced a modest official of Constantinople, his Hungarian daughter-in-law working at her spindle in an inexpensive gown, and his household eating like a pack of hunters or sheep-stealers. The lack of security for property, which was to be characteristic of the Serbian lands under Turkish rule, deepened this bad impression, and the projected marriage was broken off. Negotiations were resumed between Naples and the Serbian and Bulgarian monarchs, and the Greek Emperor sought to save himself by accepting the union of the Churches at the Council of Lyons, and by repudiating the rights

of the Bulgarian and Serbian ecclesiastical establishments to autonomy. But here again the crafty Palaeologus over-reached himself. By his concessions to the Ecumenical Patriarch he aroused the national pride of the two Slav States; by his concessions to the Pope he alienated the Orthodox party in his own capital. At the Bulgarian court the Empress Maria, who was in constant communication with the opposition at Constantinople, worked harder than ever against him, and even tried to incite the Sultan of Egypt to attack the Byzantine Empire in conjunction with the Bulgarians.

This ambitious woman now wielded the supreme power in Bulgaria, for the Tsar was incapacitated by a broken leg, and their son Michael, whom she caused to be crowned and proclaimed as his colleague, was still a child. One powerful chieftain alone stood in her path, a certain James Svętslav, who in the general confusion had assumed the style of "Emperor of the Bulgarians." A Byzantine historian has graphically described the sinister artifice by which his countrywoman first deluded, and then destroyed, this possible but ingenuous rival. She invited him to Trnovo, and there, in the cathedral, amidst the pomp and circumstance of the splendid eastern ritual, adopted the elderly nobleman as her son. Svętslav's suspicions were disarmed by this solemn act of adoption, but he found when it was too late that his affectionate "mother" had only embraced him in order the better to kill him. Even this assassination did not, however, leave her mistress of Bulgaria. A new and popular hero arose in the place of the murdered man. Ivailo (such seems to have been his real name) had begun life, like some much more famous Balkan heroes, as a swineherd, and his nickname of "the lettuce," from which the Greeks called him Lachanās, may have been given him from his habitual diet of herbs. Saintly forms appeared to him in visions as he tended his herd, urging him to seize the throne of the nation which he was destined to rule. His credulous comrades flocked to the side of the inspired peasant; two victories over the Tartar hordes, which were devastating the country with impunity, convinced even the better classes of his mission to deliver their country; and the lawful Tsar, crippled by his malady and deprived by his wife's cruel machinations of his most faithful adherents, fell, in a forlorn attempt to save his crown, by the hand of the triumphant swineherd.

The success of this adventurer disturbed the calculations of the Greek Emperor, whose recent attempts at obtaining influence over Bulgarian policy had so signally failed. His first idea was to attach the peasant ruler to his person by giving him one of his own daughters in marriage. But on second thoughts he came to the conclusion that the swineherd would doubtless fall as rapidly as he had risen, and that it would be therefore wiser to set up a rival candidate to the Bulgarian throne. He readily found an instrument for this purpose in the person of the son of the former claimant, Mytzēs, whom he married to his

daughter Irene and proclaimed Emperor of the Bulgarians under the popular name of John Asên III. Meanwhile the Dowager-Empress Maria was placed in a position of the utmost difficulty in the capital. Menaced on three sides—by the citizens of Trnovo, by the swineherd, and by the Byzantine candidate—she saw that she must come to terms with one of the two latter. Self-interest suggested Ivailo as the more likely to allow her and her son to share the throne with him, especially if she offered to become his wife. At first the peasant was disinclined to accept as a favour what he could win by force; but he was sufficiently patriotic to shrink from a further civil war, agreed to her proposal, and early in 1278 celebrated the double festival of his marriage and coronation with her at Trnovo. But this unnatural union failed to secure her happiness or that of her subjects. The savage simplicity of the swineherd was revolted by the luxury of the Byzantine princess, and when their conjugal discussions became too subtle for his rude intelligence, he beat her as he would have beaten one of his own class. Another Tartar inroad increased the perils of the situation; the Byzantine claimant, at the head of a Greek army, invested Trnovo; and, though the cruelty of Ivailo struck terror into the hearts of the besiegers, accustomed to obey the recognised rules of civilised warfare, the report of his defeat at the hands of the Tartars in 1279 caused the wearied citizens to deliver both the Empress Maria and her son to the Greeks and to recognise John Asên III as their lawful sovereign. Maria was led away *enceinte* to Hadrianople, and ended her career, so fatal to her adopted country, unlamented and unsung.

But the removal of this disturbing element did not bring peace to Bulgaria. John Asên III ascended the throne as a Greek nominee, supported by a foreign army, while the most popular man in the country was a certain George Terteri, who, though of Cuman extraction, was connected with the native nobility and was well known for his energetic character and shrewd intelligence. Byzantine diplomacy saw at once the danger ahead, and sought to avoid it by the usual method, a matrimonial alliance between the dangerous rival and the reigning Tsar. Terteri consented to wed John Asên's sister, even though he had to divorce his wife, who had already borne him an heir, in order to make this political marriage. But it was not long before circumstances made him the inevitable ruler of Bulgaria. Ivailo, supposed to have disappeared finally from the scene, suddenly reappeared in the summer of 1280 with a Tartar general at his side. In vain the Greek Emperor sent two armies to defend the throne of his minion; two successive defeats convinced John Asên that it was time to flee alike before the enemy outside and the rival within. He took with him all the portable contents of the Bulgarian treasury, including the imperial insignia which the founders of the Empire had captured from Isaac Angelus ninety years earlier, and which thus returned with their unworthy successor

to Constantinople. Such was the indignation of Michael VIII at the cowardly flight of the man whom he had laboured to make the instrument of his policy for the reduction of Bulgaria to a vassal state, that he at first refused him admission to the city. Meanwhile, George Terteri was raised to the vacant throne by the general desire of the military and the nobles. Such was his reputation that Ivailo at once retired from a contest to which he felt himself unequal single-handed.

Ivailo betook himself to the court of Nogai Khan, the Tartar chief who had once before been the arbiter of Bulgaria. There he found his old rival, John Asên III, well provided with Byzantine money, and calculating on the fact that the chief's harem contained his sister-in-law. For some time the wily Tartar was equally willing to receive the presents and listen with favour to the proposals of both candidates, till at last one night in a drunken bout he ordered Ivailo to be killed as the enemy of his father-in-law, the Greek Emperor. Asên only escaped a like fate thanks to the intervention of his wife's sister, who sent him back in safety to Constantinople. Thenceforth, he abandoned the attempt to recover the Bulgarian crown, preferring the peaceful dignity of a high Byzantine title and founding a family which played a prominent part in the medieval history of the Morea. His rival, even though dead, still continued to be a name with which to conjure; several years later, a false Ivailo caused such alarm at Constantinople that the Dowager-Empress Maria was asked to state whether he was her husband or no; even her disavowal of his identity availed nothing with the credulous peasants, who regarded him as their heaven-sent leader against the Turks. For a moment Byzantine statecraft thought that he might be utilised for that purpose; but, as his followers became more numerous and more fanatical, caution prevailed, and the pretender vanished in one of the Greek prisons.

Andronicus II, who had now succeeded to the Byzantine throne, realising the hopelessness of any further attempt to restore John Asên, not only made peace with Terteri, but sent back to him his first wife on condition that he divorced his second. Thus, the Tsar was able to pacify the scruples of the Bulgarian hierarchy, which had regarded him as excommunicated, nor could the united efforts of Pope Nicholas IV and Queen Helena of Serbia induce him to abandon the national Church. But the founder of the new dynasty was soon forced to flee before another Tartar invasion. In vain he had tried to prevent that calamity by a matrimonial alliance; Nogai Khan ravaged Bulgaria; and, while the Tsar was a suppliant at the Greek court, one of his nobles, "prince Smilec," was appointed by will of the Tartar chief to rule the country as his vassal. Smilec's reign was, however, brief; upon the death of Nogai, his son Choki claimed Bulgaria as the son-in-law of Terteri and was ostensibly supported by the latter's son, Theodore Svetslav. The allies were successful; Smilec disappeared, leaving as the one memorial of his

name the monastery which he founded near Tatar-Pazardzhik; and Choki and Svetslav entered Trnovo in triumph. Then the Bulgarian appeared in his true colours; a sudden stroke of fortune enabled him to spend money freely among his countrymen, who naturally regarded him as the rightful heir to the throne; at last, when he thought that the moment had come for action, he ordered his Tartar ally to be seized and strangled, and the Bulgarian Patriarch, who had long been suspected of intrigues with the Tartars, to be hurled from the cliffs. Two attempts to drive out the new ruler failed. There was a small Grecophil party in Bulgaria which proclaimed Michael, the son of Constantine Asên and the Empress Maria; but the reception with which he met on his arrival convinced him that his cause was hopeless. The Byzantine Court then supported the brother of Smilec, who was in his turn defeated, and the number of Byzantine magnates who were captured on that occasion enabled Svetslav to ransom his father from the custody in which the Greeks had placed him. His filial piety did not, however, so far prevail over his ambition as to make him yield the throne to the founder of his dynasty. He placed him in honourable confinement in one of his cities, where he was allowed to live in luxury provided that he did not meddle with affairs of state.

The Bulgarian Empire no longer occupied the great position in Balkan politics which it had filled half a century earlier. The rivalries of pretenders, foreign intrigues, and the sinister influence of a woman had weakened the fabric so rapidly raised by the energy of the previous Tsars. In contrast with the feverish history of this once dominant Slavonic State, that of Serbia during the same period shews a tranquillity which increased the resources of that naturally rich country and thus prepared the way for the great expansion of the Serbian dominions in the next century. The "great king," Stephen Uroš I, whose simple court had so profoundly shocked the Byzantine officials, after a long and peaceful reign, only disturbed by a Tartar inroad, was ousted from the throne in 1276 by his elder son Stephen Dragutin (or "the beloved"), assisted by the latter's brother-in-law, the King of Hungary. The old king fled to the land of Hum, where he died of a broken heart, but his cruel son did not long wear the Serbian crown. Disabled by an infirmity of the foot from the active pursuits necessary to a Balkan sovereign in the Middle Ages, he abdicated in favour of his brother Stephen Uroš II, called "Milutin" (or "the child of grace"). But, like other monarchs who have resigned, he soon grew weary of retirement, and returned to the throne, till his malady, combined with qualms of conscience, compelled him, at the end of 1281¹, to withdraw definitely from the government of Serbia. As some compensation for this loss of dignity and as occupation for his not too active mind, he received from his brother-in-law, the King of

¹ Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica*, 54, 55, 561.

Hungary, the Duchy of Mačva and Bosnia, and also governed Belgrade. There he busied himself entirely with religious questions; while he mortified his own flesh, to atone for his unfilial conduct, he and his son-in-law and vassal, Stephen Kotroman, the founder of the subsequent Bosnian dynasty, persecuted the Bogomiles with a zeal which became all the greater after his conversion to the Roman Church. At his request, the Franciscans, who have since played such an important part in Bosnian history, settled in the country; but, even with their aid, the fanaticism of Dragutin could make no headway against the stubborn heretics. At his death in 1316, the bishopric of Bosnia had been "almost destroyed," despite all the efforts of the Popes.

Stephen Uroš II has been judged very differently by his Serbian and by his Greek contemporaries. One of the former, who owed everything to him, extols his qualities as a ruler; one of the latter, who was naturally opposed to him, depicts him as a savage debauchee. The two characters are, however, by no means incompatible; and if this "pious king," the founder of churches and the endower of bishoprics, was anything but an exemplary husband, he left Serbia in a stronger position than she had ever held before. The chief object of his foreign policy was to enlarge his kingdom at the expense of the Byzantine Empire, which, he bitterly complained, had annexed foreign territory without being able to defend its own. Some two years before his accession, the Serbian troops under the guidance of a Greek deserter had penetrated as far as Seres; and the first act of his reign was to occupy Skoplje and other places in Macedonia, an undertaking all the easier in that his father-in-law, the bold Duke John of Neopatras, at that time the leading figure of Northern Greece, was at war with the Byzantine Emperor. Michael VIII died before he could punish the confederates, and his successor contented himself with sending the Tartar auxiliaries whom his father had collected to glut their desire for plunder in Serbia, and thus incidentally to weaken a nation which caused constant vexation to his subjects. The Tartars came and went, but the Serbian raids continued; Serbian standards approached the holy mount of Athos, and the Greek commander of Salonica confessed that his orthodox tactics were no match for the guerrilla warfare of these marauders. He therefore advised the Emperor, especially in view of the Turkish peril in Asia Minor, to make peace with the Serbs. Andronicus II took his advice and, to render the treaty more binding upon the volatile Serbian temperament, resolved to give the hand of one of the imperial princesses to Stephen Uroš. Such marriages were not, as a rule, happy; had not the gossips told how the "first-crowned" king had turned his Greek wife out of doors all but naked? Stephen Uroš II, it was pointed out, had an even worse reputation. That uxorious monarch, the Henry VIII of the Balkans, had already, it was true, had three wives, and had divorced two of them, while the third was still his consort. But

Byzantine sophistry declared the second and third marriages null, as having been contracted during the first wife's lifetime; as she was now dead, it followed that her husband could put away his third wife and marry again without offending the canons of the Church. Stephen Uroš was nothing loth; he wanted an heir, and had no further use for his third wife, a daughter of the dethroned Tsar Terteri; the only difficulty was that the widowed sister of Andronicus vowed that she, at any rate, did not share her brother's views as to the legality of such a second marriage. The Greek Emperor was not, however, discouraged by her refusal; he sacrificed his only daughter Simonis, though not yet six years of age, to the exigencies of politics and the coarseness of a notorious evil-liver who was older than her father and in Greek eyes his social inferior. The scruples of the Ecumenical Patriarch, increased by the theological flirtations of Stephen Uroš with the Roman Church, availed as little as the opposition of the Queen-Dowager Helena, who, as a good Catholic, regarded her son's marriage with abhorrence. The parties met on an island in the Vardar; the King of Serbia handed over his Bulgarian consort together with the Greek deserter who had for so long led his forces to victory, and received in exchange his little bride with all the humility of a *parvenu* marrying into an old family.

This matrimonial alliance with the imperial family suggested to the ambitious mind of Stephen Uroš the possibility of uniting the Byzantine and Serbian dominions under a single sceptre. His plan was shared by his mother-in-law, the Empress Irene, who, as an Italian, was devoid of Hellenic patriotism, and, as a second wife, knew that her sons could never succeed to their father's throne. In the King of Serbia she saw the means of acquiring the Byzantine Empire for her own progeny, if not for the offspring of Simonis, then for one of her own sons. From her retreat at Salonica she made Stephen Uroš the confidant of her conjugal woes, loaded him with presents, and sent him every year a more and more richly-jewelled tiara, almost as splendid as that of the Emperor himself. When it became clear that Simonis was not likely to have children, she persuaded the King of Serbia to adopt one of her two surviving sons as his heir. But the luxurious Byzantine princeling could not stand the hard and uncomfortable life in Serbia, and his brother also, after a brief experience of the Serbian court, was thankful to return to the civilisation of northern Italy. Simonis herself, when she grew up, disliked her adopted country quite as much as her brothers had done. She spent as much of her time as possible at Constantinople; and, when her husband threatened vengeance on the Greek Empire unless she returned to him, she was sent back in tears to his barbarous embraces. Obviously, then, Balkan capitals were even less agreeable places of residence for luxurious persons of culture at that period than they are now.

The Greek connexion had naturally given offence to the national

party in Serbia, which was opposed to foreign influence and suspicious of feminine intrigues. Stephen Dragutin protested from his retirement at an arrangement which might deprive his own son Vladislav of the right, which he had never renounced for him, of succeeding to the Serbian throne upon the death of Stephen Uroš. A more dangerous rival was the king's bastard, Stephen, who had received the family appanage in the Zeta, but was impatient of this subordinate position and ready to come forward as the champion of the national cause against his father's Grecophil policy. Stephen Uroš, however, soon suppressed his bastard's rebellion; the rebel fled to the banks of the Bojana, where stood the church which still bears his father's name¹, and begged for pardon. But the king was anxious to render him incapable of a second conspiracy, and his Byzantine associates suggested to him that blinding was the best punishment for traitors of the blood royal. The operation was, however, only partially successful; but the victim had the sense to conceal the fact, and lived unmolested in a monastery at Constantinople, until his father in his old age, at the instigation of the historian Daniel, recalled him to Serbia and assigned him the ancient royal city of Dioclea, whose ruins may yet be seen near the modern Podgorica, as a residence.

The failure of his scheme for the union of the Serbian and Greek realms under his dynasty by peaceful means led Stephen Uroš to enter into negotiations, in 1308, with Charles of Valois, then seeking to recover the lost Latin Empire of Constantinople in the name of his daughter, the titular Empress. In order the better to secure the aid of the West, the crafty Serb expressed to Pope Clement V the desire to be received into that Roman Church of which his mother had been so ardent a devotee, and which could protect him from a possible French invasion. A treaty was then concluded between him and Charles, pledging both parties to render mutual assistance to one another, and securing for the King of Serbia the continued possession of Prilep, Štip, and other Macedonian castles formerly belonging to the Byzantine Empire. A further proposal for a marriage between the two families, contingent on the conversion of Stephen Uroš, fell through, and the feebleness and dilatoriness of the French prince convinced the shrewd Serbian monarch that such an alliance would not further his designs, and that he had nothing to fear from that quarter. He therefore abandoned Western Europe and the Papacy, and was sufficient of a Balkan patriot to assist the Greeks against the Turks.

The death of his brother Dragutin gave Stephen Uroš an opportunity of expanding his kingdom in another direction. He imprisoned his nephew, whom the royal monk had commended to his care, and made himself master of his inheritance in Mačva. Stephen Uroš II was now at the zenith of his power. It was no mere flourish of the pen which made him sign himself "King of Serbia, the land of Hum, Dioclea,

¹ *Wissenschaftliche Mittheilungen*, vii. 231.

Albania, and the sea-coast," for his authority really corresponded with those titles, and under him Serbia had, what she has at last regained, a sea-board on the Adriatic. But his unprincipled annexation of a former Hungarian land brought down upon him the vengeance of the King of Hungary, while his designs against the Angevin port of Durazzo¹, which he had already once captured, aroused the animosity of its owner, Philip of Taranto, now husband of the titular Empress of Constantinople. The Pope bade the Catholic Albanians fight against the schismatic Serb who had played fast and loose with the Holy See, and the league was completed by the adhesion of the powerful Croatian family of Šubić, which had latterly become predominant in Bosnia and would brook no Serbian interference in their domain. Stephen Uroš lost his brother's Bosnian duchy together with Belgrade; but to the last he was bent on the extension of his dominions. Death carried him off in 1321, as he was scheming to make political profit out of the quarrel between the elder and the younger Andronicus.

Stephen Uroš II was an opportunist in both politics and religion. His alliances were entirely dictated by motives of expediency, and he regarded the *filiogue* clause as merely a pawn in the diplomatic game. If he delighted the Orthodox Church by his gifts to Mount Athos, and his pious foundations at Salonica, Constantinople, and even Jerusalem; if a chapel near Studenica still preserves the memory of this "great-grandson of St Simeon and son of the great King Uroš"—he was so indifferent, or so statesmanlike, as to permit six Catholic sees within his realm and to allow Catholic bishops and even the *djed*, or "grand-sire," of the Bogomiles to sit in his Council at Cattaro. One of his laws prevented boundary disputes between villages; he was anxious to encourage commerce; and, though he more than once harassed Ragusa, he wrote to Venice offering to keep open and guard the great trade route which traversed his kingdom and then led across Bulgaria to the Black Sea. But in commercial, as in other matters, his code of honour was low, and his issue of counterfeit Venetian coin has gained him a place among the evil kings in the *Paradiso*² of Dante.

Upon the death of Stephen Uroš II the crown should have naturally devolved upon his nephew Vladislav, who had now been released from prison. But the clergy, always a dominant factor in Serbian politics, favoured the election of the bastard Stephen, who, during his father's later years, had borne all the royal titles³ as a designation of his ultimate succession, and had already once championed the national idea. Stephen proclaimed that he was no longer blind, and astutely ascribed to a miracle what was the result of the venality or clumsiness

¹ Angevin 1272, Serbian 1296, Angevin 1305, Serbian 1319, Angevin 1322, Albanian 1363, Venetian 1392, Turkish 1501, Serbian 1912, Albanian 1913.

² XIX. 140-1.

³ *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* I. 192.

of the operator. To cover his illegitimacy, he assumed the family name of Uroš, already associated in the popular mind with two successful kings, but posterity knows him by that of Dečanski from the monastery of Dečani in Old Serbia, which he founded. With the ruthlessness of his race, he speedily rid himself of his two competitors, Vladislav and another natural son of the late king, a certain Constantine. Vladislav died an exile in Hungary; Constantine was nailed to a cross and then sawn asunder; while the usurper tried yet further to strengthen his position by wooing a daughter of Philip of Taranto and by obtaining from the Pope a certificate of his legitimacy. To secure these objects he surrendered Durazzo and offered to become a Catholic, only to withdraw his offer when the support of the Orthodox clergy seemed more valuable to him than that of Rome.

The civil war which was at that time threatening the Byzantine Empire involved both the neighbouring Slav states, each anxious to benefit by the struggle, which ultimately resulted in a pitched battle between them. The dynasty of Terteri had become extinct in Bulgaria a year after the accession of Stephen Uroš III to the Serbian throne. Světslav, although he had domestic difficulties with Byzantium, had kept on good terms with the Serbs, and his warlike son George Terteri II, who succeeded him in 1322, died after a single Greek campaign. Bulgaria was therefore once more distracted by the claims of rival claimants, of whom the strongest was Michael of Vidin, already styled "Despot of Bulgaria," and founder of the last dynasty of Bulgarian Tsars. His father had established himself as a petty prince in that famous Danubian fortress; the son, as was natural in one living so near the Serbian frontier, had married a half-sister of the new King of Serbia and owed his success to Serbian aid. In order, however, to secure peace with the Greeks and at the same time to consolidate his position at home, he now repudiated his consort with her children, and espoused the widow of Světslav, who was a sister of the younger Andronicus. This matrimonial alliance led to a political treaty between the Bulgarian Tsar and the impatient heir of Byzantium; they met in the autumn of 1326, and came to terms which seemed favourable to both: Michael promised to assist Andronicus to oust his grandfather from the throne; Andronicus pledged himself to support Michael against the natural indignation of the insulted Serbian king, and, in the event of his own enterprise succeeding, to give money and territory to his Bulgarian brother-in-law. On the other side, the elder Andronicus sent the historian Nicephorus Gregorâs on a mission to the Serbian government, with the object of conciliating Stephen Uroš III. The literary diplomatist has left us a comical picture of the peripatetic Serbian court, then in the vicinity of Skoplje, as it struck a highly-cultured Byzantine. The inadequate efforts of his barbarian majesty to do honour to the high-born Greek lady whose daughter he had recently married, seemed

ridiculous to a visitor versed in the etiquette of Constantinople. Still, as the historian complacently remarked, one cannot expect apes and ants to act like eagles and lions, and he re-crossed the Serbian frontier thanking Providence that he had been born a Greek. Similar opinions with regard to the Balkan Slavs are still held by many of his countrymen.

After making, however, due allowance for the national bias of a Greek author, it is clear that Serbia, then on the eve of becoming the chief power of the peninsula, was still far behind both the Greek and Latin states of the Levant in civilisation. The contemporary writer, Archbishop Adam, who has left a valuable account of the country at this period, tells us that it contained no walled and moated castles; the palaces of the king and his nobles were of wood, surrounded by palisades, and the only houses of stone were in the Latin towns on the Adriatic coast, such as Antivari, Cattaro, and Dulcigno, the residences of the Catholic Archbishop and his suffragans. Yet Rascia was naturally a very rich land, producing plenty of corn, wine, and oil, well-watered, and abounding in forests full of game. Five gold mines and as many of silver were being constantly worked, and Stephen Uroš II could afford a gift of plate and a silver altar to the church of St Nicholas at Bari. But his subjects were too heterogeneous to be united; the Latins of Scutari and the coast-towns, as well as the Albanians, also Catholics, were oppressed by the Serbs, whose priesthood was debased and whose bishops were often in prison. As against this last statement, obviously caused by the theological zeal of the archbishop, we may set the gloomy account of the abuses in the six Roman churches of Serbia, which we have from Pope Benedict XI some twenty years earlier, while, at the moment when Adam wrote, the Orthodox Archbishop was no less eminent a man than the patriotic historian Daniel. If, then, Serbia was still uncultured, if the manners and morals of her rustic court still left much to desire, she was obviously possessed of great natural energy and capacity, which only awaited a favourable moment and the right man to develop them.

While the Serbian nobles, whose influence was usually predominant in deciding questions of public policy, soon wearied of supporting the elder Andronicus, and plainly said that if their sovereign insisted on fighting he would fight alone, the Bulgarian Tsar suddenly changed sides, warmly espoused the cause of the old Emperor, and sent 3000 horsemen under a Russian general with the object (so it was suspected) of seizing Constantinople for himself and thus realising the dream of his greatest predecessors. Self-interest and patriotism alike urged the younger Andronicus to warn his grandfather of the danger which he would incur if he entrusted the palace to the custody of these untrustworthy allies. Andronicus II acted on this timely hint from his rival; for neither of them could desire to see a Bulgarian conquest of Constantinople as the result of their family disputes. The Russian was alone admitted within the gates, and the reproaches and bribes of the

younger Andronicus speedily effected the recall of the Bulgarian force. A few days later Andronicus III entered the city in triumph; Byzantium never again so nearly fell beneath the Bulgarian yoke as in that memorable spring of 1328, until the famous campaign of 1912-13.

The same Bulgarian Tsar, who had thus all but achieved the ideal of every Balkan nationality, was destined to bring his country to the verge of ruin. Stephen Uroš III had never forgiven the insult to his sister, and Michael therefore resolved to forestall a Serbian invasion by acting first. He had no difficulty in forming a formidable coalition against the rising Serbian state. Andronicus III, whose Macedonian frontier near Ochrida had lately been ravaged by the Serbs, joined the league and menaced Serbia from the south; the Prince of Wallachia and 3000 Tartar mercenaries swelled the native army of Bulgaria, already 12,000 strong. At the head of such forces, Michael boasted that he would be crowned in his enemy's land, and set out down the valley of the Upper Struma to cross the frontier a little to the north of Köstendil, then a Serbian but now a Bulgarian town. On 28 June 1330, the most decisive battle in the mutual history of the two Slav states was fought in the plain of Velbužd, as Köstendil was then called. The Tsar was taken by surprise, for he had expected no fighting that day; indeed, it was afterwards stated that his opponent had given his word not to begin hostilities till the morrow. Thus, at the moment when the Serbs charged from a narrow defile into the plain, the bulk of the Bulgarian army was away foraging. Aided by a body of several hundred tall German knights, Stephen Uroš easily routed his distracted foes; Michael himself was unhorsed, and died, either in the battle, or of his wounds a few days afterwards; but the conquerors merely disarmed the fugitives, whom, as men of their own race, it was not lawful to take captive. On the hill where his tent had been pitched, the victor founded a church of the Ascension, the ruins of which still serve as a memorial of this fratricidal war. Bulgaria was now at his mercy, for the rest of the native army had fled at the news of their sovereign's defeat, and Andronicus III at once returned to Constantinople. The proud Bulgarian nobles, who had deemed themselves their Tsar's "half-brothers," came to meet their conqueror and hear his decision. Stephen Uroš might have united the two Slav states under his own sceptre, and thus prevented those further rivalries which have governed Balkan politics in our own time. But he preferred to allow Bulgaria, then more than twenty days' journey in extent, to remain as a dependency of his family; he contented himself with restoring his sister and her young son John Stephen to the throne of the Tsars. The immediate effect of this policy was the expulsion of the late ruler's Greek consort, which gave her brother Andronicus an excuse for annexing a large part of Southern Bulgaria. Thus Greeks and Serbs alike had profited by the victory of Velbužd; Serbia had won the hegemony of the Balkan States.

Stephen Uroš III did not long enjoy the fruits of his triumph. His worst enemies were those of his own household, and he fell a victim to one of those domestic tragedies which were characteristic of his family. He had married a second time, and his eldest son Stephen, then twenty-two years of age but still unprovided with a wife, looked with suspicion on the offspring of his Greek step-mother, a cousin of Andronicus III. He had been carefully educated as a crown prince; indeed, his father had had him crowned with himself, and had promised to make him ruler over half his kingdom. The courtier-like Archbishop Daniel, anxious to please his young master, asserts that Stephen Uroš had not kept this promise; an impartial Greek contemporary says that the prince's suspicions were exploited by those Serbian nobles who were weary of his father's rule and hoped to benefit by a change. They proclaimed him king; he was crowned on 8 September 1331; the flower of the army, attracted by his prowess at Velbužd, flocked to his standard; the old king was easily captured and imprisoned in the castle of Zvečan near Mitrovica. There, two months later, he was strangled, either by the orders¹ or at least with the tacit consent of his son, who durst not oppose the will of his powerful followers²; and the name of Dušan, by which Stephen Uroš IV is known in history, is variously derived, according to the view taken of his share in his father's murder, either from *duša* ("soul"), a pet name given him by his fond parent, or from *dušiti* ("to throttle"). The epithet of "strong," which his countrymen applied to him, was fully justified by the masterful character and the great achievements of this most famous of all Serbian sovereigns.

His first care was to secure himself on the side of Bulgaria, where, a few months before, a revolution organised by two court officials had driven the Serbian Empress and her son from the throne, and had placed upon it John Alexander, a nephew of the late Tsar, who assumed the ever popular surname of Asén. Instead of attempting to restore his aunt to Bulgaria against the will of the nobles, Dušan adopted the wiser policy of marrying the sister of the usurper and thus attaching the latter to his side, while John Stephen, after wandering as an exile from one land to another, now a suppliant at Constantinople and now a prisoner at Siena, ended his days at Naples. Thus Bulgaria under John Alexander was practically a dependency of Serbia.

But Dušan by his Bulgarian marriage disarmed the enmity, and gained the support, of another powerful Balkan ruler, the Prince of Wallachia, who was father-in-law of the Bulgarian Tsar, and who had first made the land which was the nucleus of the present kingdom of

¹ Adam (Pseudo-Brochart) in *Rec. hist. Crois., Doc. Armén.* II. 438, 446, who wrote in 1332, thus confirming the date of Dušan's accession (cf. *Rad.* XIX. 180; *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* XIII. 337; XXV. 122), which Miklosich (*Monumenta Serbica*, 115) had placed in 1336.

² Nicephorus Gregorâs, I. 457.

Roumania a factor in Balkan politics. During the former half of the thirteenth century, while Serbia and Bulgaria were already independent states, the opposite bank of the Danube had been traversed by successive barbarian tribes, the Cumans and the Tartars, who had driven the Roumanian population before them to the mountains. A Slav population dwelt in the plains, the *banat* of Craiova, or "little Wallachia," was Hungarian, while here and there the fortresses of the Teutonic Knights and the Knights of St John availed but little to stem the tide of invasion. But about 1290 the Roumanians descended from Transylvania into Wallachia to escape the religious persecutions of the Catholic Kings of Hungary, and the generally received account ascribes the foundation of the principality to a colony from Fogaras, which, under the leadership of Radou Negrou, or Rudolf the Black, established itself at Campulung, and gave to the essentially flat country of Wallachia the local name of "land of mountains," in memory of those mountains whence the founder came. His successor, Ivanko Basaraba, the ally of the Bulgarians in the campaign of 1330, extended his authority over "little Wallachia," completely routed the Hungarians, and strengthened his position by marrying his daughter to the new Tsar of Bulgaria. About the same time as the foundation of the Wallachian principality, a second principality, dependent however on the Hungarian crown, was created in Moldavia by another colony of Roumanians from the north of Transylvania under a chief named Dragoche. This vassal state threw off its allegiance to Hungary about 1349, and became independent. Such was the origin of the two Danubian principalities, which thenceforth existed under various forms till their transformation in our own day into the kingdom of Roumania.

Thus connected with the rulers of Bulgaria and Wallachia, Dušan was able to begin the realisation of that great scheme which had been cherished by his grandfather of forming a Serbian Empire on the ruins of Byzantium. While his ally, the Bulgarian Tsar, recaptured the places south of the Balkans which Andronicus III had so recently occupied, Dušan, assisted by Sir Janni, a political adventurer who had abandoned the Byzantine for the Serbian court, easily conquered nearly all Western Macedonia. The assassination of Sir Janni by an emissary of the Byzantine Emperor and the threatening attitude of the King of Hungary led him, however, to make peace with the Greeks and even to seek their aid against this dangerous enemy. The Greek and the Serbian monarchs met and spent a very pleasant week in one another's society; and this meeting had important results, because it gave Dušan an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the future Emperor John Cantacuzene, then in attendance on Andronicus. Thus, for the moment, peace reigned between the Greeks and the Balkan Slavs; Dušan was content to bide his time; John Alexander obtained the hand of the Emperor's daughter for his eldest son, and could afford

to ignore the appeal which the Pope made to him to join the Church of Rome.

Dušan availed himself of this peace with the Greeks to attack the Angevin possessions in Albania. Durazzo, however, the most important of them, resisted all his efforts, and the Angevin rule there survived the great Serbian conqueror. But this aggressive policy had made him an object of general alarm. The King of Hungary, himself an Angevin, and the powerful Bosnian *ban*, Stephen Kotromanić, who had succeeded the family of Šubić in 1322, regarded him with suspicion, and their attitude so greatly alarmed him that he wrote to Venice in 1340, begging for a refuge there in the event of his being defeated by his numerous enemies, offering to assist the republic in her Italian wars, and guaranteeing her merchants a safe transit across his dominions on their way to Constantinople. Venice bestowed the rights of citizenship upon the serviceable Serbian monarch and his family.

The death of Andronicus III in 1341 and the rebellion of John Cantacuzene against the rule of the young Emperor John V and his mother Anne of Savoy were Dušan's opportunity. He at once disregarded his treaty with the Greeks, and overran the whole of Macedonia. Soon this barbarian, as the elegant Byzantine authors considered him, had the proud satisfaction of receiving at Priština, which, though it had been the Serbian capital, was still only an unfortified village, bids for his alliance from both parties in the struggle for the dominion of the Empire. Cantacuzene, in the hour of need, sought a personal interview with him there; the King and Queen of Serbia welcomed their distinguished suppliant with every mark of respect; but, when it came to business, Dušan demanded as the price of his assistance the whole of the Byzantine Empire west of the pass of Christópolis near Kavala, or, at any rate, of Salonica. Cantacuzene informs us that he indignantly declined to give up even the meanest of Greek cities; the utmost concession which he could be induced to make was to recognise Dušan's rights over the Greek territory which he already held. Anne of Savoy, as a foreigner, was less patriotic; she more than once promised Dušan that, if he would send her Cantacuzene alive or dead, she would give him what her rival had refused, so that the Serbian Empire would stretch from the Adriatic to the Aegean. The matter was referred to the Council of twenty-four officers of State whom the Serbian kings were wont to consult, and this Council, acting on the advice of the queen, repudiated the suggestion of assassinating an honoured guest, and advised Dušan to be content with a formal oath from Cantacuzene that he would respect the territorial *status quo*. Baffled in her negotiations with the King of Serbia, Anne of Savoy did not scruple to purchase the aid of the Bulgarian Tsar by the cession of Philippopolis and eight other places, the last aggrandisement of the Bulgarian Empire. Thus, the divisions of the Greeks benefited Serbia and Bulgaria alike, while both Canta-

cuzene and his rival found ere long that their Slav allies only looked to their own advancement. In the general confusion, both parties invoked the assistance of the Turks, who had taken Brŭsa (Prusa) in 1326 and Nicaea in 1330, and who now appeared sporadically in Europe. Brigand chiefs formed bands in the mountains, changing sides whenever it suited their purpose, and one of these guerrilla leaders, a Bulgarian named Momchilo, not only survives in the pages of the imperial historian but is still the hero of Slavonic ballads.

It was the policy of Dušan to allow the two Greek factions to exhaust themselves, and to strengthen his position at the expense of both. While they fought, he occupied one place after another, till, by 1345, he had acquired all that he had originally asked Cantacuzene to cede, and the whole of Macedonia, except Salonica, was in his power. It was scarcely an exaggeration when he described himself in a letter to the Doge, written from Seres in this year, as "King of Serbia, Dioclea, the land of Hum, the Zeta, Albania, and the Maritime region, partner in no small part of the Empire of Bulgaria, and lord of almost all the Empire of Romania."¹ But for the ruler of so vast a realm the title of King seemed insignificant, especially as his vassal, the ruler of Bulgaria, bore the great name of Tsar. Accordingly, early in 1346, Dušan had himself crowned at Skoplje, whither he had transferred the Serbian capital, as "Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks," soon to be magnified into "Tsar and Autocrat of the Serbs and Greeks, the Bulgarians and Albanians." Shortly before, with the consent of the Bulgarian, and in defiance of the Ecumenical, Patriarch, he had raised the Archbishop of Serbia to that exalted dignity with his seat at Ipek, and the two Slav Patriarchs of Trnovo and Ipek placed the crown upon his head. At the same time, on the analogy of the Western Empire with its "King of the Romans," he had his son Stephen Uroš V proclaimed king, and assigned to him the old Serbian lands as far as Skoplje, reserving for himself the new conquests from there to Kavala. Byzantine emblems and customs were introduced into the brand-new Serbian Empire; the Tsar assumed the tiara and the double-eagle as the heir of the great Constantine, and wrote to the Doge proposing an alliance for the conquest of Constantinople. The officials of his court received the high-sounding titles of Byzantium, and in the papal correspondence with Serbia we read of a "Sebastocrator," a "Great Logothete," a "Caesar," and a "Despot." The governors of important Serbian cities, such as Cattaro and Scutari, were styled "Counts," those of minor places, like Antivari, were called "Captains." In vain did Cantacuzene, as soon as the civil war was over, demand the restitution of the Greek territory which Dušan had conquered since their meeting in 1342. The Tsar had no intention of keeping his word or of returning to the *status quo* of that year.

¹ *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* II. 278-9.

On the contrary, he still further extended his frontiers to the south, where they marched with the former despotat of Epirus. That important state, founded on the morrow of the Latin conquest of Constantinople, had maintained its independence till, in 1336, it had been at last re-united with the Byzantine Empire. Cantacuzene had appointed one of his relatives as its governor; but upon his death in 1349 the Serbian Tsar, who had already occupied Joánnina, annexed Epirus and Thessaly, assuming the further titles of "Despot of Arta and Count of Vlachia." His brother, Simeon Uroš, was sent to rule Acarnania and Aetolia as his viceroy, while the Serbian "Caesar," Preljub, governed Joánnina and Thessaly. Thus a large part of northern Greece owned the sway of the Serbs. Cantacuzene resolved at once to punish this culminating act of aggression. The moment was favourable to his plans, for Dušan was engaged on the Bosnian frontier, and several of the Serbian nobles, always intolerant of authority, deserted to the popular Greek Emperor, whom they knew and liked. Such was his success (for even the Serbian capital of Skoplje offered to surrender in the absence of the Tsar) that Dušan hastened back and came to terms with his enemy. The two Emperors met outside Salonica; Cantacuzene reproached the Tsar with his breach of the treaty made between them eight years earlier; and, if we may judge from the speeches which he composed for himself and his opponent, Dušan was completely dumbfounded by his arguments. A fresh treaty was drawn up between them, by which Acarnania, Thessaly, and the south-east of Macedonia as far as Seres, were to be retroceded to the Greeks, and five commissioners were appointed on either side for the transfer of this territory. But the renewal of the unhappy quarrel between Cantacuzene and John V thwarted the execution of this agreement. Emissaries of the young Emperor advised Dušan to resist, telling him that he would obtain better terms by aiding their master against Cantacuzene. The Tsar thereupon repudiated the treaty which he had just signed, promised his assistance to John V, and urged him to divorce Cantacuzene's daughter and marry the sister of the Serbian Empress. Cantacuzene in vain warned his young rival to beware of Serbian intrigues; in vain did Anne of Savoy endeavour to prevent the unholy league; a new triple alliance was formed between John V and the two Serbian and Bulgarian Tsars. Thus Dušan was able to retain his Greek conquests, with a flagrant disregard for the treaty of 1350 which recalls the futility of such instruments in the settlement of Balkan questions.

It was not, however, only the other Christian races of the Near East who profited by the fatal dissensions between the two Greek Emperors. The nation, which a century later was destined to grind them all to powder, owed its first permanent settlement in Europe to their divisions. The Ottoman Turks from their capital of Brūsa could aid either party, according as it suited their convenience, nor did Cantacuzene hesitate to buy the support of the Sultan Orkhān by giving him his daughter

to wife. For some years the Turks were content to raid the neighbouring coast; then their marauding bands penetrated farther inland, and so severely devastated Bulgaria that John Alexander complained to Cantacuzene of the depredations of his savage allies. Cantacuzene was sufficient of a statesman to foresee the coming Turkish triumph; he replied by offering to keep up a fleet at the Dardanelles for the protection of the European coast, if the Bulgarian Tsar would contribute towards its maintenance. A popular demonstration at Trnovo in favour of common action against the Turks convinced the Tsar of the wisdom of accepting Cantacuzene's proposal. But at the last moment Dušan wrecked the scheme by remonstrating with his vassal for paying what he scornfully called "tribute" to the Greek Empire. In vain Cantacuzene warned the offended Bulgarian that Bulgaria would one day, when it was too late, rue his decision. Not long after, in 1353 according to the Greek, or in 1356 according to the Turkish account, Orkhān's son crossed the Dardanelles and occupied the castle of Tzympe, the first permanent settlement of the Turks in Europe. Cantacuzene had offered them money to quit, and they were preparing to go when a sudden convulsion of nature tempted them to break their bargain; the great earthquake of 2 March 1354 laid the neighbouring towns in ruins¹; and Gallipoli, the largest of them, was colonised and re-fortified by these unwelcome guests, who had now come to stay and conquer.

It has been mentioned that Cantacuzene's successes in 1350 were favoured by Dušan's absence in Bosnia. That Napoleonic ruler could not be expected to acquiesce in the co-existence of another Serb state adjacent to, yet independent of, his own. He had an old grudge against Stephen Kotromanić, the Bosnian *ban*, because the latter had annexed, in 1325, the land of Hum, which for the previous two generations had been a dependency of the Serbian crown and furnished one of Dušan's many titles. Kotromanić had further gained for Bosnia what she had never had before, an outlet on the Adriatic, and both Hungary and Venice were glad of the aid of so powerful a ruler, who thus laid the foundations of the future kingdom built up by his successor. As soon as he had sufficient leisure from his Macedonian conquests, Dušan demanded the hand of the *ban's* only daughter for his son and, as her dowry, the restitution of the Serbian territory which his rival had annexed; and, though Venetian intervention prevented an immediate conflict, a collision between the two Serb potentates was clearly inevitable. The Bosnian *ban* thought it wiser to begin the

¹ The Byzantine chronicle (in *Sitzungsberichte der k. Akademie*, ix. 392) gives the date of the earthquake; the Turkish settlement was, according to N. Gregorās (iii. 224) "about two years earlier," and due to Cantacuzene (iii. 202); the latter (iii. 242, 276) puts it in 1353, and is confirmed by the Bulgarian Chronicle (in *Archiv für slav. Philologie*, xiii. 537) which narrates it immediately after his embassy to John Alexander.

attack; he availed himself of Dušan's Greek campaign of 1349 to invade the Serbian Empire and to menace the town of Cattaro. Dušan, as soon as the subjugation of Epirus and Thessaly was complete, marched into Bosnia, and laid siege to the strong castle of Bobovac, whose picturesque ruins still recall the memory of the many Bosnian rulers who once resided within its walls. The invader found valuable allies in the Bogomiles, whose support Kotromanić had alienated by embracing Catholicism, and who, as has usually happened in the history of Bosnia, flocked to the standard of anyone who would free them from their persecutor. Their power had greatly increased; they possessed a complete organisation; their spiritual head, or *djed*, resided at Janjići in the Bosna valley, and twelve "teachers" formed a regular hierarchy under his orders. Moreover, the conflicts of the Dominicans and Franciscans for the exclusive privilege of persecuting the Bosnian heretics had naturally favoured the growth of the heresy. Bobovac, however, resisted all attacks, for the chivalry of its garrison no less than the zeal of the besiegers was aroused by the presence of the *ban's* beautiful daughter within the castle. Dušan was recalled by the troubles in his own Empire, nor did the few remaining years of his reign leave him time for repeating this invasion. The death of Kotromanić in 1353, and the succession of his young nephew Tvrtko I under the regency of a woman, might otherwise have been the Serbian Tsar's opportunity; for the Bosnian magnates, many of whom were zealous Bogomiles, were contemptuous of a *ban* who was not only a child but a Catholic, nor could his mother have opposed a second Serbian attack. But Dušan was occupied with greater schemes; the moment passed for ever, and it was reserved for the despised Tvrtko to make for himself the greatest name in Bosnian history, to found a kingdom, and to unite Serbia, Croatia, and Dalmatia beneath the sceptre of the first Bosnian king.

At the moment of Tvrtko's accession, Dušan was engaged in war with Hungary. Louis the Great, who now sat on the Hungarian throne, had aided Kotromanić against the Serbs and had married his fair daughter, whose hand Dušan had demanded for his son, and whom he had besieged in Bobovac. The two monarchies had long been rivals, as they were yesterday; the Serbian Tsar marched to the Danube and the Save; Belgrade, the future Serbian capital, lost a generation earlier and already beginning to be an important fortress, was recovered. But in the following year the Catholic king made such formidable preparations for an attack upon the schismatic Tsar, that the latter considered it prudent to revert to the time-honoured diplomacy of his predecessors in such cases, and to affect a desire for conversion to Catholicism, so as to secure the intervention of the Pope on his behalf. He therefore wrote offering to restore to the Catholics of his dominions most of the monasteries and churches which he had taken from them, and begging the Pope to send him some men learned in the Catholic faith. At the

same time he asked to be appointed "Captain of the Church" against the Turks. Innocent VI, with the ingenuousness characteristic of the Papacy in its negotiations with the Balkan Slavs, imagined that Dušan was in earnest, and sent two bishops to his court, while he diverted the King of Hungary's projected attack upon so hopeful a proselyte. When, however, the papal legate and his companion arrived in 1355 at the Serbian court, they found that the Tsar had no longer any interest in becoming a Catholic. Cantacuzene had just been deposed; the Byzantine Empire had fallen into the hands of John V; and there was a party among the Greeks themselves who thought that the only way of saving the remnant from the Turks was to invoke the protection of the powerful Serbian Emperor¹, whose chances would naturally be all the greater if he remained a member of the Orthodox Church. Accordingly, when the legate was introduced into the presence of the Tsar, "of all men of his time the tallest, and withal terrible to look upon,"² he was expected to conform to the usual custom of the Serbian court and kiss the Emperor's foot. On his refusal, Dušan ordered that none of his Catholic subjects should attend the legate's mass under pain of losing his eyesight; but neither the orders nor the savage mien of the insistent tyrant availed against the fervid faith of his German guard, whose captain, Palmann, boldly told him that they feared God more than they feared the Tsar.

Dušan might well believe that the moment had come for completing his conquests by that of Constantinople, and establishing what a poetic Serbian prince of our own day once called a "Balkan Empire," which should embrace all the races of the variegated peninsula within its borders, and keep the Turks beyond the Bosphorus, the Hungarians beyond the Save. The former were threatening his enemies, the Greeks; the latter were about to attack his friends, the Venetians. On St Michael's Day, 1355, if we may believe the native chronicler, he assembled his nobles, and asked whether he should lead them against Byzantium or Buda-Pesth. To their answer, that they would follow him whithersoever he bade them, his reply was "to Constantinople," from which Thrace alone separated his dominions. But on the way he fell ill of a fever, and at Diavoli, on 20 December, he died³. By a strange irony, the very site of his death is uncertain; for, while some think that he had not yet left his own dominions, others place Diavoli within a few leagues of the imperial city. No Serbian ruler has ever approached so near it; possibly, had he succeeded and had another Dušan succeeded him, the Turkish conquest might have been averted.

¹ *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* III. 266.

² ASBoll., *Januarius*, II. 998.

³ Miklosich (*Monumenta Serbica*, 155) gives the day. The year must be 1355, not 1356, because a Venetian document of 23 Jan. 1356, alludes to his death (*Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* III. 308). Similarly the Serbian and Bosnian Chronicles in *Arch. f. slav. Philologie*, XIII. 520; XXIII. 631, 633, and in *Wiss. Mitt.* IV. 377.

Great as were his conquests, the Serbian Napoleon was no mere soldier. Like the French Emperor, he was a legislator as well as a commander, and he has left behind him a code of law, the so-called *Zakonnik*, which, like the *Code Napoléon*, has survived the vast but fleeting empire which its author too rapidly acquired. Dušan's law-book consists of 120 articles, of which the first 104 were published in 1349 and the remaining 16 five years later. It is not an original production, but is largely based on previous legislation; the articles dealing with ecclesiastical matters are derived from the canon law of the Greek Church, others are taken from the statutes of the Adriatic coast-towns, notably those of Budua, while the institution of trial by jury is borrowed from Stephen Uroš II. For the modern reader its chief importance lies in the light which it throws upon the political and social condition of the Serbian Empire at its zenith.

Medieval Serbia resembled neither of the two Serb states of our own day. Unlike Montenegro, it was never an autocracy, even in the time of its first and greatest Tsar, but the powers of the monarch were limited, as in medieval Bulgaria, by the influence of the great nobles, a class which does not exist in the modern Serbian kingdom. Society consisted of the sovereign; the ecclesiastical hierarchy, ranging from the newly-created Patriarch to the village priest; the greater and lesser nobles, called respectively *vlastele* and *vlasteličići*; the peasants, some free and some serfs bound to the soil; slaves; servants for hire; and, in the coast-towns, such as Cattaro, and at a few places inland, small communities of burghers. But the magnates were throughout the dominant section; one of them established himself as an independent prince at Strumitsa in Macedonia; on two occasions Dušan had to cope with their rebellions. The leading men among them formed a privy council of twenty-four which he consulted before deciding important questions of policy; his legal code was approved by a *sabor*, or parliament of nobles, great and small, at which the Patriarch and the other chief officials of the Church were present; and its provisions defined their privileges as jealously as his own. Their lands were declared hereditary, and their only feudal burdens consisted of a tithe to holy Church and of military service to the Tsar during their lifetime, a compulsory bequest of their weapons and their best horse to him after their death. If they built a church on their estates, they became patrons of the living; they exercised judicial powers, with a few exceptions, over their own serfs; they enjoyed the privilege of killing their inferiors with comparative impunity, for a graduated tariff regulated the punishment for premeditated murder—hanging for that of a priest or monk, burning for parricide, fratricide, or infanticide, the loss of both hands and a fine for that of a noble by a common man, a simple fine for that of a commoner by a noble. Two days a week the peasant was compelled to work for his lord; once a year he had to pay a capitation-tax to the Tsar. But the law protected him

and secured to him the fruits of his labour; no village might be laid under contribution by two successive army corps; and, in case of trial by jury, the jurors were always chosen from the class to which the accused belonged. But the peasant was expressly excluded from all share in public affairs; they were the business of his betters alone; and, if he organised or attended a public meeting, he lost his ears and was branded on the face. For theft or arson the village, for *corvées* or fines the household, of the culprit were held collectively responsible; the provinces had to build the palaces and maintain the fortresses of the Tsar.

Next to the nobles, the Orthodox Church was the most influential class of the community. Though on occasion Dušan coquetted with Rome, his permanent policy was to strengthen the national Church, to which he had given a separate organisation, independent of Constantinople. The early archbishops of Serbia had been drawn from the junior members of the royal family, and their interests were accordingly identified with those of the Crown; their successors were often the apologists and the sycophants of royal criminals, just as, in our own day, we have seen a Metropolitan of Belgrade condone successful regicide. In return for their support, the established Church received special privileges and exemptions: on the one hand, the Tsar protected the new Patriarchate from Greek reprisals by ordering the expulsion of Greek priests; on the other, his code enjoined the compulsory conversion of his Catholic subjects and the punishment of Catholic priests who attempted to propagate their doctrines in Orthodox Serbia. A similar phenomenon, the result of policy not of fanaticism, meets us in the kindred Empire of Bulgaria. There we find John Alexander—a man who was so little of a purist that he sent his Wallachian wife to a nunnery and married a beautiful Jewess—consigning his ecclesiastical conscience to an inspired bigot, half-hermit, half-missionary, and, at his bidding, holding two Church Councils against the Bogomiles and similar heretics, who sought salvation by discarding their clothes, and who paid for their errors by branding or banishment. “The friend of monks, the nourisher of the poor,” he founded a monastery at the foot of Mt Vitoš, and gave rich gifts to Rila, where one of Dušan's great officials ended his career and built the tower which still preserves his name. Even the Jewish Tsaritsa, with all the zeal of a convert, restored churches and endowed monasteries, but her munificence could not prevent the restriction of the civil liberties of her own people, from whom the state executioner was selected.

While the great Serbia of Dušan, like the smaller Serbia of our own day, was pre-eminently an agricultural state, whose inhabitants were chiefly occupied in tilling the land and in rearing live-stock, it possessed the enormous advantage of a coastline, which thus facilitated trade. Like the enlightened statesman that he was, Dušan had no prejudices

against foreign merchants. He allowed them to circulate freely, and to the Ragusans, who were the most important of them, he shewed marked favours. Thus, while Ragusan chroniclers complain of his father's vexatious policy towards the South Slavonic republic, he vied with the *ban* of Bosnia, in 1333, in giving her the peninsula of Sabbioncello, over which both sovereigns had claims. The possession of this long and narrow strip of land enormously reduced the time and cost of transport into Bosnia, and amply repaid the annual tribute which Ragusa prudently paid to both Serbia and Bosnia to ensure her title, and the expense of the still extant fortifications which she hastily erected to defend it, lest the king should repent of his bargain. He allowed a colony of Saxons to work the silver mines of Novobrd, and to exercise the trade of charcoal-burners; but a wise regard for his forests led him to limit the number of these relentless woodmen. His guard was composed of Germans, and its captain obtained great influence with him. He guaranteed the privileges of the numerous Greek cities in Macedonia which he had conquered, and endeavoured to secure the support of the natural leaders of the Hellenic element in his composite Empire by including them among the ranks of the nobility. Anxious for information about other, and more civilised, lands than his own, he sent frequent missions to different countries, and sought the hand of a French princess for his son; but this great match was hindered by the difference of religion, and Stephen Uroš V had to content himself with a Wallachian wife. With no Western state were the relations of both Serbia and Bulgaria closer than with Venice. Dušan more than once offered her his aid; she on one occasion accepted his mediation; while John Alexander gave her merchants leave to build a church, and allowed her consul to reside at Varna, whence she could dispute the Black Sea trade with Genoa, whose colony of Kaffa had already brought her into intercourse with Bulgaria. To shew his hospitality to foreigners, Dušan decreed that ambassadors from abroad should receive free meals in each village through which they passed.

Of literary culture there are traces in both the Slav Empires at this period. Dušan, following the example of Stephen Uroš II, the donor of books to the Serbian hospital which he founded at Constantinople, presented the nucleus of a library to Ragusa. John Alexander was, however, a patron of literature on a larger scale. For him was executed the Slav translation of the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses, the copy of which in the Vatican¹ contains coloured portraits: of the Tsar; of his second son, John Asên, lying dead with the Emperor and Empress standing by the bier, and the Patriarch and clergy performing the obsequies; of the boy's reception in heaven; and of the Tsar, this time surrounded by three of his sons. These extremely curious pictures, rougher in design than Byzantine work, are of great value for the

¹ Codice Slavo II.

Bulgarian art and costume of the middle of the fourteenth century, just as the frescoes at Boyana are for those of the thirteenth. Three other treatises of a theological character were copied by order of this same ruler, while his spiritual adviser, St Theodosius of Trnovo, whose life was written in Greek, was the master of a school of literary monks, whose works are the swan-song of the second Bulgarian Empire. Boril, another much earlier Tsar, commanded the translation of a Greek law-book directed against the Bogomiles. But the Serbian sovereigns of the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries, more fortunate than their Bulgarian contemporaries, found a biographer in the Archbishop Daniel, whose partiality can only be excused by his dependence upon their bounty, but whose work forms a continuation of the various lives of Nemanja. Of Serbian music the sole contemporary account is from the pen of a Greek, who found the singing of the Easter hymns simply excruciating; but the same author mentions that the Serbs already commemorated the great deeds of their national heroes in those ballads which only attained their full development after the fatal battle of Kossovo. Their best architects came from Cattaro, where was also the Serbian mint in the reigns of both Dušan and his son. It is noticeable that under the former's rival, Stephen Kotromanić, began the series of Bosnian coins, a proof of the growing commercial importance of that third Slav state.

The Serbs look back to the reign of Dušan as the most glorious epoch of their history. But his name is more than a historical memory: it is a political programme. The five centuries and more which have elapsed since his death have seemed but as a watch in the night of Turkish domination to the patriots of Belgrade. They have regarded his conquests as the title-deeds of their race to lands that had long ceased to be theirs, and a Serbian diplomatist has been known to quote him to a practical British statesman, to whom it would never have occurred to claim a large part of France because it had belonged to the Plantagenets in the time of Dušan. But, while the lost Empire of the great Tsar is still a factor in Balkan politics, it must have been evident to those of his contemporaries who were men of foresight that it could not last. Medieval Serbia, like some modern states, was made too fast; at its zenith it comprised five Balkan races—Serbs, Greeks, Albanians, Koutzo-Wallachs, and that aboriginal tribe whose name still survived in Dušan's code in the term *neropch* as a designation for a kind of serf. Of these races, the Greeks were on a higher intellectual plane and were the products of an older civilisation than that of their conquerors, who recognised the fact by imitating the usages of the Greek capital, where Dušan himself passed his boyhood. Moreover, the natural antipathy between the Hellene and the Slav was accentuated by Dušan's creation of a Serbian Patriarchate, a measure which produced similar bitterness to that caused by the erection of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, and

which had a similar political object. The Greeks of the Serbian Empire naturally regarded with suspicion and resentment a Tsar who was excommunicated by the Ecumenical Patriarch and who had expelled their priests; and the negotiations of the Serbian government shew the importance which it attached to official Greek recognition of the national Church. The Albanians, again, were first-class fighting men, who then, as now, had little love for the Serbs, from whom they differed in religion, while the hands of the Bogomile heretics were always against the established order in their own country, although they might side with a foreign invader of another faith. Thus, despite Dušan's attempt to enforce theological uniformity, four religious bodies yet further divided the five races of his Empire, and experience has shewn, alike in India and in the Balkans, that such a mixture of nationalities and creeds can only be governed by a foreign race which stands outside them all. The Serbian element, even if united, was not sufficiently numerous to dominate the others, nor did Dušan in all his glory unite the whole Serbo-Croatian nor even the whole Serb stock beneath his sceptre. The one unifying force in the Empire, the monarchy, was weakened by its limitations, which in their turn corresponded with the national traditions and character. Even the strongest of Serbian monarchs was barely equal to the task of suppressing the great nobles, and it was doubtless distrust of the native aristocracy which led him to surround himself with a German guard and to give important posts to foreigners who owed everything to him. While, therefore, Stephen Dušan is justly considered to have been the ablest and most famous of Serbian rulers, the vast Empire which he built up so rapidly was as ephemeral as that of Napoleon. Still, short-lived as was that Serbian hegemony of the Balkan races which was his work, it will be remembered by his countrymen as long as the Eastern Question, in which these historical reminiscences have played such an embarrassing part, continues to perplex the statesmen of Western, and to divide the nationalities of South-Eastern, Europe.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BALKAN STATES.

II. THE TURKISH CONQUEST (1355-1483).

THE great Serbian Empire broke into fragments on the death of Dušan. The dying Tsar had made his magnates swear to maintain the rights of his son, then a boy of nineteen. But even the most solemn oaths could not restrain the boundless ambition and the mutual jealousies of those unruly officials. Stephen Uroš V had scarcely been proclaimed when his uncle Simeon Uroš, the viceroy of Acarnania and Aetolia, disputed the succession. Many of the nobles were on the latter's side; the Dowager-Empress, instead of protecting her son's interests, played for her own hand; while the most powerful satraps availed themselves of this family quarrel to establish themselves as independent princes, each in his own part of the country, sending aid to either of the rival Emperors, or remaining neutral, according as it suited their purpose. The civil war in Serbia and the death of Preljub, the Serbian governor of Joánnina and Thessaly, suggested to Nicephorus II, the exiled Despot of Epirus, the idea of recovering his lost dominions. His former subjects received him gladly; he drove Simeon into Macedonia and might have retained his throne, had he not offended the Albanians by deserting his wife in order to marry the sister of the Serbian Empress. An Albanian victory near the town of Achelous in 1358 ended his career and with it the despotat of Epirus. Simeon then returned, and established his authority in reality over Thessaly, in name over Epirus also. Thenceforth, however, he confined his personal attention entirely to the former province, making Trikala his capital and styling himself "Emperor of the Greeks and Serbs," while he assigned Joánnina to his son-in-law Thomas Preljubović, and left the rest of Epirus to two Albanian chieftains, heads of the clans of Boua and Liosa. From that time onward the Serbian possessions in Greece remained separate from the rest of the Empire. Simeon Uroš was succeeded in 1371 by his son John Uroš, who retired from the pomps of Trikala to the famous monastery of Metéoron, where, long after the Turkish conquest of Thessaly in 1393, he died as abbot. At Joánnina Thomas Preljubović, after a tyrannical reign, was assassinated by his bodyguard,

and his widow, by marrying a Florentine, ended Serbian rule there in 1386. The four decades of Serbian sway over Thessaly and Epirus in the fourteenth century are now almost forgotten. Its only memorials are an inscription at the Serbian capital of Trikala; the church of the Transfiguration at Metéoron, founded by the pious "King Joseph," as John Uroš was called by his fellow-monks; and perhaps the weird beasts imbedded in the walls of the castle at Joánnina.

The Greek provinces of the Serbian Empire were naturally least attached to Dušan's son. With a certain section of the Serbian nobles John Cantacuzene had always been more popular than the great Tsar himself, and accordingly Voijihna, who held the rank of "Caesar" and governed Drama, invited Matthew Cantacuzene to invade Macedonia, and promised that Seres, which contained the Empress, should be his. Matthew engaged a body of Turkish auxiliaries for this enterprise; but these turbulent irregulars disregarded his orders, and began to attack and plunder his Serbian confederates. The latter retaliated, and Matthew, forced to flee, was captured while hiding among the reeds of the marshes near Philippopolis, and handed over by Voijihna to the Greek Emperor. Seres, meanwhile, continued to be the residence of the Serbian Empress, while from there to the Danube stretched the vast provinces of the brothers John Uglješa and Vukašin, natives of the Herzegovina, of whom the former was marshal, and the latter guardian and cup-bearer, of the young Tsar. Between Seres and the Vardar lay the domain of Bogdan, a doughty warrior whose name is still famous in Serbian ballads. In the Zeta, the cradle of the dynasty, the family of Balša, by some connected with the French house of Baux, by others with the royal blood of Nemanja through the female line, from imperial governors became independent princes, whose territory stretched down to the Adriatic at Budua and Antivari and whose chief residence was Scutari. Various native chiefs held the rest of Albania, most famous among them Carlo Thopia, who in 1368 drove the Angevins, from whom he boasted his descent, out of Durazzo, and whose monument with the French lilies is still to be seen near Elbassan¹. Finally, Lazar Hrebeljanović, a young noble connected by marriage with the imperial house (according to some he was a natural son of Dušan²), administered Mačva on the Hungarian frontier. Central authority there was none save the young and feeble Tsar, a mere figure-head, guided, like Rehoboam of old, by the advice of men as young and inexperienced as himself.

The first result of his weakness was a Hungarian invasion. The two powerful magnates whose provinces adjoined the Danube, Vukašin and Lazar, quarrelled with one another, the latter invoked the aid of the King of Hungary, and a Hungarian army forced the Serbs to retire to the impregnable forests which then covered their mountains. Ragusa,

¹ *Wiss. Mitt.* x. p. 67.

² *Ducas*, p. 15.

since 1358 a Hungarian protectorate, was involved in this dispute, with the natural result that Serbian trade suffered. Peace had not long been restored when a revolution broke out in Serbia. Vukašin, a man of boundless ambition and marked ability, was no longer content with the rank of despot, which he had received from his young master, now emancipated from his control. Supported by his brother and a strong party among the nobles, he drove Stephen Uroš V from the throne in 1366, assumed the title of king with the government of the specially Serbian lands whose centre was Prizren, and rewarded Uglješa with the style of "despot" and the Greek districts round Seres, where the latter wisely endeavoured to strengthen his hold upon the Hellenic population in view of the Turkish peril, by restoring to the Ecumenical Patriarch all the churches and privileges which Dušan had transferred to the newly-created Serbian Patriarchate. A later legend makes the usurper complete his act of treachery by the murder of his sovereign during a hunting-party on the plain of Kossovo. But it has now been proved¹ that Stephen Uroš survived his supposed murderer. For the rest of his life, however, he was a mere cypher in the history of his country, glad to accept a present from the Ragusans, who, in spite of his former war with them, alone remained faithful to him and continued to pay him the customary tribute, even suffering losses for his sake.

The Bulgarian Empire was almost as much divided as the Serbian. The Jewish marriage of John Alexander had created bitter enmity between his favourite son, John Shishman, whom he had designed as his successor at Trnovo, and John Sracimir, the surviving offspring of his first wife, to whom he had assigned the family castle of Vidin as an appanage, while on the Black Sea coast an independent prince had established himself and has perpetuated his name, Dobrotich, in the dismal swamps of the Dobrudzha. Thus weakened by internal divisions, Bulgaria was further crippled by the attacks of her Christian neighbours, at a time when all should have united their resources against the Turks. John V Palaeologus invaded the Black Sea coast, and extorted a war indemnity from the Tsar, and when the latter died² in 1365 the Hungarians seized Vidin, carried off Sracimir and his wife, and retained possession of that famous fortress for four years. The new Tsar, John Shishman, revenged himself on the Greek Emperor, who had come to ask his aid in repelling the common enemy of Christianity, by throwing him into prison, whence he was only released by the prowess of the famous "green count," Amadeus VI of Savoy. Well might the rhetorician Demetrius Kydónis point out the futility of an alliance with a nation which was so fickle and now so feeble, and which dynastic marriages had failed to bind to Byzantine interests. The Ecumenical Patriarch tried

¹ *Sitzungsberichte der k. böhm. Gesellschaft* (1885), pp. 115, 131, 136-7; *Archiv f. slav. Phil.* II. p. 108.

² *Ibid.* XIII. p. 538; XIV. pp. 265-6.

indeed to form a Greco-Serbian league to check the Ottoman advance, but died at the moment when his diplomacy seemed to be successful.

Meanwhile, the Turks were rapidly spreading their sway over Thrace. Demotika, Hadrianople, Philippopolis, marked the progress of their arms; the city of Philip became the residence of the first Beglerbeg of Rumelia, that of Hadrian the capital of the Turkish Empire. In vain the chivalrous Count of Savoy recovered Gallipoli; despite the appeal of Kydónis, that important position was surrendered to the Sultan. One place after another in Bulgaria fell before him; their inhabitants were exempted from taxes on condition that they guarded the baggage of the Turkish army. Popular legends still preserve the memory of the stand made by the imperial family in the neighbourhood of Sofia; the disastrous attempt of the Serbs to repulse the Turks in the valley of the Maritza is one of the landmarks of Balkan history. Alarmed at the progress of the enemy, Vukašin and his brother Uglješa collected a large army of Serbs and Wallachs, which marched as far as Chirmen between Philippopolis and Hadrianople. There, at dawn on 26 September 1371, a greatly inferior Turkish force surprised them; most of the Christians perished in the waters of the river; both the King of Serbia and his brother were slain, and poetic justice made the traitor Vukašin the victim of his own servant. So great was the carnage that the battlefield is still called "the Serbs' destruction." Macedonia was now at the mercy of the conqueror, for the leaders of the people had been killed, and their successors and survivors were compelled to pay tribute and render military service to the Turks. On these ignominious terms "the king's [Vukašin's] son Marko," that greatest hero of South Slavonic poetry, was able to retain Prilep and Skoplje, and his friend Constantine the district round Velbužd, whose modern name of Kōstendil contains a reminiscence of the time when the borderland between Bulgaria and Macedonia was still known as "Constantine's country." Even the Bulgarian Tsar could only save himself by promising to follow the Sultan to war and by sending his sister Thamar to Murād's seraglio, where "the white Bulgarian" princess neither forsook her religion nor yet forgot her country.

Two months after the Serbian defeat on the Maritza, Stephen Uroš V died "as Tsar and in his own land," the last legitimate male descendant of the house of Nemanja. The adherents of the national dynasty naturally fixed their eyes at this critical moment upon Lazar Hrebeljanović, who was connected with the imperial family and had led the opposition to Vukašin. Lazar ascended the throne of the greatly diminished Serbian Empire, and either a sense of proportion or his native modesty led him to prefer the style of "Prince" to the title of Tsar which was conferred upon him. But the hegemony of the Southern Slavs now passed from Serbia to Bosnia, whose ruler, Tvrtko, after a long and desperate struggle for the mastery of his own house,

had become the leading statesman of the Balkan peninsula. Threatened by Louis the Great of Hungary, who forced him to surrender part of the land of Hum and sought to make him a mere puppet without power; deposed at one moment by his rebellious barons and his ambitious brother, and then restored by Hungarian arms; he was at last able to think of extending his dominions. The moment was favourable to his plans. The King of Hungary was occupied with Poland; the Bosnian nobles were crushed; his brother was an exile at Ragusa; while Lazar was glad to purchase his aid against his own refractory magnates by allowing him to take from them and keep for himself large portions of Serbian territory, which included a strip of the Dalmatian coast from the Cetina to the Bocche di Cattaro and the historic monastery of Mileševo in the district of Novibazar. There in 1376, on the grave of St Sava, Tvrtko had himself crowned with two diadems "King of the Serbs, and of Bosnia, and of the coast." Not a voice was raised against this assumption of the royal authority and of the Serbian title, which he could claim as great-grandson of Stephen Dragutin. All his successors bore it, together with the kingly name of Stephen. Ragusa was the first to recognise him as the rightful wearer of the Serbian crown, and promptly paid him the so-called "Serbian tribute," which the republic had been accustomed to render to the Kings of Serbia on the feast of St Demetrius. Venice followed suit, and the King of Hungary was too busy to protest. Tvrtko proceeded to live up to his new dignities. His court at Sutjeska and Bobovac, where the crown was kept, was organised on the Byzantine model. Rough Bosnian barons held offices with high-sounding Greek names, and the sovereign became the fountain of hereditary honours. Hitherto Bosnian coins had been scarce except some of Stephen Kotromanić, and Ragusan, Hungarian, and Venetian pieces had fulfilled most purposes of trade. But now money, of which many specimens still exist, was minted from the silver of Srebrenica and Olovo, bearing Tvrtko's visored helmet surmounted by a crown of fleur-de-lis with a hop-blossom above it. Married to a princess of the Bulgarian imperial house, representing in his own person both branches of the Serbian stock, Stephen Tvrtko took his new office of king by the grace of God very seriously, for he was animated, as he once wrote, "with the wish to raise up that which is fallen and to restore that which is destroyed."¹

Tvrtko had gained the great object of all Serbian rulers, medieval and modern—a frontage on the sea. But the flourishing republic of Ragusa interrupted his coast-line, while he coveted the old Serbian city of Cattaro, hidden in the remotest bend of its splendid fiord; both of them were then under Hungarian protection, and the former was too strong to be conquered by one who had no navy. The death of Louis the Great of Hungary in 1382 and the subsequent confusion were his

¹ Miklosich, *Mon. Serb.* p. 187.

opportunity. In the same year he founded the picturesque fortress of Novi, or Castelnuovo, at the entrance of the Bocche, to be the rival of Ragusa and the outlet of all the inland trade, as it is the port of the new Bosnian line. Three years later Cattaro was his. Thus possessed of the fiord which is now a Yugoslav naval station, he sought to make Bosnia a maritime power and thereby conquer the Dalmatian coast-towns. One after another they were about to surrender, and 15 June 1389 had been fixed as the date on which Spalato was to have opened its gates. But when that day arrived, Tvrtko was occupied elsewhere, and the fate of the Southern Slavs for centuries was decided on the field of Kossovo.

The successes of the Turkish arms had thoroughly alarmed the leaders of the Serbian race, for the Turks had been coming nearer and nearer to the peculiarly Serbian lands. In 1382 the divided Bulgarian Empire had lost Sofia, the present capital; in 1386 Niš was taken¹ from the Serbs and Lazar forced to purchase a craven peace by the promise to pay an annual tribute and to furnish a contingent of horsemen to the Sultan. Upon this the Bosnian king made common cause with his Serbian neighbour; a Pan-Serbian league was formed against the Turks, and in 1387 on the banks of the Toplica the allies won a great victory, their first and last, over the dreaded foe. This triumph at once decided the waverers: John Shishman joined the league; Mircea, the first Prince of Wallachia who received the epithet of "Great," took his share in the defence of the peninsula. Croats, Albanians, and even Poles and Hungarians, furnished contingents to the army which was intended to save the Balkans for the Balkan peoples. On his side, Murād made long preparations to crush the Christians who had dared to combine against their destined masters.

Bulgaria, being the nearest, received the first blow. The capital of the Tsars offered but a feeble resistance; Shishman, after a stubborn defence of Great Nicopolis between Trnovo and the Danube, obtained peace from the Sultan on condition that he paid his arrears of tribute and ceded the fortress of Silistria. Scarcely had Murād left, when he refused to carry out this humiliating cession; whereupon the Turkish commander captured his castles on the Danube, besieged him again in Great Nicopolis, and forced him a second time to beg for mercy. Murād was long-suffering; he allowed Shishman to retain a throne from which he knew full well that he could remove him at his own good pleasure. Sracimir, too, remained in his "royal city of Vidin" by accepting the suzerainty of the Sultan, instead of signing himself "vassal of the King of Hungary."² Having thus disposed of Bulgaria, Murād marched into Old Serbia by way of Köstendil, where his tributary, Constantine, entertained him splendidly and joined his army. Lazar's messenger,

¹ The Serbian is more probable than the Turkish date of 1375.

² *Archiv f. slav. Phil.* xvii. pp. 544-7.

the bearer of a haughty message, was sent back with an equally haughty answer. From his capital of Kruševac (for the Serbian royal residence had receded within the recent limits of the modern kingdom) Lazar set out attended by all his paladins to do battle on the field of Kosovo.

The armies met on 15 June 1389. Seven nationalities composed that of the Christians; at least one Christian vassal helped to swell the smaller forces of the Turks. While Murād was arraying himself for the fight, a noble Serb, Miloš Kobilić, presented himself as a deserter and begged to have speech of the Sultan, for whose ear he had important information. His request was granted, he entered the royal tent, and stabbed Murād to the heart, paying with his own life for this act of daring and thereby gaining immortality in Serbian poetry. Though deprived of their sovereign, the Turks, with the perfect discipline once characteristic of their armies on the field of battle, went into action without dismay. At first the Bosniaks under Vlatko Hranić drove back one of the Turkish wings; but Bāyazid I, the young Sultan, held his own on the other, and threw the Christians into disorder. A rumour of treachery increased their confusion; whether truly or no,¹ it is still the popular tradition that Vuk Branković, Lazar's son-in-law, betrayed the Serbian cause at Kosovo. Lazar was taken prisoner, and slain in the tent where the dying Murād lay, and Bāyazid secured the succession to his father's throne by ordering his brother to be strangled, thus completing the horrors of that fatal day.

At first Christendom believed that the Turks had been defeated; a *Te Deum* was sung in Paris to the God of battles, and Florence wrote to congratulate Tvrtko on the supposed victory, to which his Bosniaks had contributed. But Lazar's widow Milica, as the ballad so beautifully tells the tale, soon learnt the truth in her "white palace" at Kruševac from the crows that had hovered over the battlefield. The name of Kosovo polje ("the plain of blackbirds") is still remembered throughout the Serbian lands as if the fight had been fought but yesterday. Every year the sad anniversary is solemnly kept, and in token of mourning for that great national calamity (the Waterloo of the Serbian Empire) the Montenegrins still wear a black band on their caps. Murād's heart is still preserved on the spot where he died; Lazar's shroud is still treasured by the Hungarian Serbs in the monastery of Vrdnik; and in many a lonely village the minstrel sings to the sound of the *gusle* the melancholy legend of Kosovo. Kumanovo, 523 years later, avenged that day.

¹ The other versions are that Murād was killed by a wounded Serb on the field, and Lazar in the battle. Stanojević (*Archiv*, xviii. p. 416 n. 1) and Jireček (*Gesch. d. Serben*, II. i, 122) deny the tradition, universal since 1601, of Branković's treachery. Cf. Ducas, pp. 15-7; Chalcocondyles, pp. 53-9, 327; Sa'd-ad-Din, I. pp. 152-5; Makusev, *Monumenta*, I. p. 528 (a contemporary document, which makes 12 Serbs force their way to Murād's tent). The form "Kobilić," which appears in the Italian version of Ducas (p. 353), was altered in the eighteenth century to "Obilić," because "Kobilić" (i.e. "son of a brood-mare") seemed inelegant.

The Serbian Empire had fallen, but a diminished Serbian principality lingered on for another 70 years. Bāyazīd I recognised Stephen Lazarević, the late ruler's eldest son, a lad not yet of age, on condition that he paid tribute, came every year with a contingent to join the Turkish troops, and gave him the hand of his youngest sister. The Sultan then withdrew, leaving the Serbs weakened and divided. Vuk Branković, likewise his vassal, held the old capital of Priština and styled himself "lord of the Serbs and of the Danubian regions"; the dynasty of Balša ruled over the Zeta. Tvrtko, instead of using this brief respite to concentrate all his energies for the defence of his realm against the Turks, continued his Dalmatian campaign; made himself master of all the coast-towns, except Zara and Ragusa, as well as of some of the islands; and assumed, in 1390, the additional title of "King of Dalmatia and Croatia." The first King of Bosnia had now reached the summit of his power. He had achieved the difficult feat of uniting Serbs and Croats under one sceptre; he had made Bosnia the centre of a great kingdom, which possessed a frontage on the Adriatic from the Quarnero to Cattaro, save for the two enclaves of Zara and Ragusa; he had laid the foundations of a sea-power; and under his auspices Dalmatia, in union with Bosnia, was no longer what she has so often been—"a face without a head." Even thus his ambition was not appeased. He was anxious to conclude a political alliance with Venice, and a matrimonial alliance (for his wife had just died) with the house of Habsburg. Then, on 23 March 1391, he died, without even being able to secure the succession for his son, and the vast power which his country had so rapidly acquired as rapidly waned. The Bosnian kingdom had been made too fast. Its founder had not lived long enough to weld his conquests into an harmonious whole, to combine Catholic Croats with Orthodox Serbs, Bosnian Slavs with the Latin population of the Dalmatian coast-towns, Bogomile heretics with zealous partisans of Rome. The old Slavonic law of succession, which did not recognise the custom of primogeniture, added to these racial and religious difficulties by multiplying candidates to the elective monarchy; and thus foreign princes found an excuse for intervention, and the great barons an excuse for independence. Deprived of all real authority, which lay in the hands of the privy council of nobles, Tvrtko's successors were unable to cope with the Turkish autocracy, while the Kings of Hungary, instead of assisting them, turned their arms against a land which from its geographical position might have been the bulwark of Christendom.

The evil effects of Tvrtko's death were soon felt. His brother, or cousin, Stephen Dabiša, who succeeded him, felt himself too feeble to govern so large a kingdom. The Turks invaded Bosnia; the King of Naples was plotting to obtain Dalmatia and Croatia. Accordingly, at Djakovo in Slavonia, in 1393, Dabiša ceded the two valuable and neighbouring lands, which his brother had so lately won, to King Sigismund of Hungary, who recognised him as King of Bosnia, and to whom he

bequeathed the Bosnian crown after his death. A combination of Bosnian magnates and Croatian rebels refused, however, to accept this arrangement, which Dabiša thereupon repudiated. A Hungarian invasion and the capture of the strong fortress of Dobor on the lower Bosna reduced him to submission, and a battle before the walls of Knin in Dalmatia finally severed the brief connexion between that country and the Bosnian crown. On Dabiša's death, in 1395, the royal authority was further weakened by the regency of his widow, Helena Gruba, in the name of his infant son. All power was in the hands of the magnates, who had elected her as their nominal sovereign, but who were practically independent princes in their own domains. One of their number, the Grand-Duke Hrvoje Vukčić, towered above his fellows, and his figure dominates Bosnian history for the next quarter of a century.

Meanwhile the Turks had gained fresh triumphs in the Eastern Balkans. Mircea of Wallachia, who like his modern representative ruled over the Dobrudzha with the strong fortress of Silistria (a precedent invoked in 1913), was carried off a prisoner to Brusa and only released on payment of tribute in 1391—the first mention of Wallachia as a tributary province of Turkey. Two years later Bāyazīd resolved to make an end of Bulgaria. On 17 July 1393 Trnovo was taken by storm after a three months' siege; the churches were desecrated, the castle and the palaces were set on fire, the leading nobles were treacherously summoned to a consultation and then butchered; the last Bulgarian Patriarch was stripped of his sacred garb and led to execution on the city wall. At the last moment, however, a miracle (so runs the legend) arrested the headsman's arm; the Patriarch's life was spared; and he lived to conduct a band of sorrowful exiles across the Balkans, where he was ordered to bid his flock farewell. Their path led to Asia Minor, his to Macedonia, where he ended his days; the Bulgarian national Church was suppressed, and from 1394 to 1870 Bulgaria remained under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Thus alike in politics and religion the Bulgars became the slaves of foreigners; the Turks governed their bodies, the Greeks ministered to their souls. It is no wonder that many abjured their faith in order to reap the advantages of the Turkish colony which settled on the castle hill among the blackened walls of the imperial palaces, and offered up prayer in the mosque that had once been the church of the Forty Martyrs, over the graves of the Bulgarian Tsars.

John Shishman had been absent when his capital fell, but he did not long survive its fall. Local tradition connects his death with the mound which still bears his name near Samokov, where seven fountains mark the successive bounds of his severed head. A Bulgarian chronicle¹ states, however, that Bāyazīd killed the captive Tsar on 3 June 1395. One of his sons became a Musulman; another settled in Hungary;

¹ *Archiv f. slav. Phil.* XIII. p. 539.

while Sracimir was allowed to linger as a Turkish vassal in his palace at Vidin—the last remnant of the Bulgarian Empire.

Bāyazīd's next object was to crush Mirčea. Followed by his unwilling Serbian dependents, "the king's son, Marko," and Constantine, he invaded Wallachia, and at Rovine on 10 October 1394 gained a victory with heavy loss of life. Marko Kraljević had said to his friend Constantine that he prayed that the Christians might win and that he himself might fall among the first victims of their swords. Half the prayer was heard; the two comrades perished in the battle. Mirčea fled to Sigismund of Hungary, who restored him to his throne and prepared to recover Bulgaria, which he had demanded from the Sultan as an ancient possession of the Hungarian crown. Bāyazīd's reply was to lead the envoy into his arsenal, and there to shew him hanging on the walls the weapons that were the Turkish title-deeds of Bulgaria.

Sigismund assembled an army of many nationalities, which was to drive the Turk from Europe and revive the memory of the Crusades. The first act of his soldiers in the Balkan peninsula was to attack the Christian vassals of the Sultan, to plunder the Serbs, and to force Sracimir of Vidin to acknowledge for the second time the Hungarian suzerainty. Nicopolis on the Danube¹ resisted for 15 days, until Bāyazīd had time to come up. There, on 25 September 1396, a great battle was fought which sealed the fate of this brilliant but ill-planned expedition. The rashness of the proud French chivalry, the retreat of the Wallachian prince, and the strategy of the Sultan, were responsible for the overwhelming defeat of the Christians, while it was reserved for Stephen Lazarević and his 15,000 Serbs², at a critical moment, to strike the decisive blow for the Turks. Immediately after the battle, or at most two years later, the victor ended the last vestige of the Bulgarian Empire at Vidin, and the whole of Bulgaria became for nearly five centuries a Turkish province. The last Tsar's son, like Constantine "the Philosopher" and other Bulgarian men of letters (for the Empress Anne of Vidin had patronised learning³), found a refuge at the court of the literary Serbian prince, whose hospitality Constantine repaid by writing the biography which is so valuable a record of this period. Unfortunately South Slavonic literature only began to flourish when the Balkan States were already either dead or dying.

Stephen Lazarević was well aware that he only existed upon the sufferance of the Sultan, and for the first thirteen years of his long reign he thought it prudent to follow a Turcophil policy, even at the cost of his own race and his own religion. Content with the modest title of "Despot," which he received from the Byzantine Emperor, he aimed at the retention of local autonomy by the strict observance of his

¹ *Archiv f. slav. Phil.* XIII. p. 539, xiv. p. 274.

² Schiltberger, *Bondage*, p. 3.

³ *Archives de l'Orient latin*, II. pp. 389-90.

promises to his suzerain. Thus every year he accompanied the Turkish troops; in 1398 his soldiers assisted in the first great Turkish invasion of Bosnia; in 1402 he stood by the side of Bāyazid at the fatal battle of Angora with 5,000 (according to others 10,000) lancers, all clad in armour. When the fortune of the day had already decided against the Sultan, the Serbian horsemen twice cut their way through the Tartar bowmen, whose arrows rebounded from their iron cuirasses. Seeing that all was lost, Stephen in vain urged Bāyazid to flee; and, when the latter refused to leave the field, the Serbian prince saved the life of the Sultan's eldest son Sulaimān, and escaped with him to Brūsa. There the Sultan's Serbian wife, whose hand had been the price of Serbian autonomy thirteen years before, fell into the power of Tamerlane. The brutal Mongol, flushed with his victory, insulted both his captives by compelling the Serbian Sultana to pour out his wine in the presence of her husband, no longer "the Thunderbolt" of Islām.

The Turkish defeat at Angora and the civil war between the sons of Bāyazid which followed it, removed for a time the danger which threatened the Christian states of the Balkan peninsula. It was now the policy of the Serbian Despot to play off one Turkish pretender against another. At first he supported Sulaimān, who had been proclaimed Sultan at Hadrianople; then, like Mirčea of Wallachia, he espoused the cause of Mūsā, only, however, to desert him at a critical moment. But Stephen was not the only Serb who sought to profit by the rivalry of the Turkish claimants. George Branković, the son of the traditional traitor of Kossovo, had succeeded his father in 1398, and, no longer content with the lordship of Priština, had assumed the style of "Prince of Serbia." Branković undermined Stephen's influence at the court of Sulaimān, who despatched him with a Turkish force to make good his pretensions. A second battle on the fatal field of Kossovo, fought on 21 November 1403, resulted in so uncertain a victory for either side that Branković and Stephen concluded peace. The two relatives were temporarily reconciled; Branković contented himself with his paternal heritage and the expectation that one day he might succeed the childless Stephen; Sulaimān was occupied by the civil war in Asia, and sorely-tried Serbia enjoyed, under her benevolent despot, a period of peace, while an attempt of the late Tsar's sons to raise a revolt in Bulgaria failed.

Stephen Lazarević, secure against Turkish and domestic intrigue, devoted his energies to the organisation of his country and the patronage of literature. We are told that he appointed a species of Cabinet, with which he was wont to discuss affairs of state; a second class of officials meanwhile attended in an outer room to receive the orders of his ministers; while a third set of functionaries waited in an ante-chamber to carry them out. Imaginative writers have seen in these arrangements the germs of parliamentary government; but the description rather suggests an elaborate system of bureaucracy. He obtained Belgrade

from the Hungarians by diplomacy in 1404, fortified it, and adorned it with churches. But his most celebrated religious foundation was the monastery of Manassia, still one of the glories of Serbia. His own inclinations were in the direction of a monastic life, and he converted his court into an abode of puritanical dullness, whence music and mirth were banished and where literature was the sole relaxation of the pious diplomatist who sat on the throne. Himself an author, he possessed a rich library, and he strove to increase it by the translations of Greek books which were made by his orders. Thus for five years the land had rest.

Serbia had again and again suffered from the quarrels of the reigning family; and even when it should have united to consolidate the state against the inevitable Turkish revival, a fresh pretender arose in the person of Stephen's next brother Vuk, who demanded half of the country as his share and appeared at the head of a Turkish army to enforce his demand. Stephen was compelled to retire to the strong frontier-fortress of Belgrade, and to purchase domestic peace by ceding the south of Serbia to his brother, under Turkish suzerainty, in 1409. Fortunately for the national unity, Vuk did not long survive this arrangement. Summoned to assist Mūsà in the civil war which still divided the Turkish Empire, he played the part of traitor, after the fashion of the day, thinking thereby to obtain the whole of Serbia from the gratitude of Sulaimān. But on his way to seize his reward, he fell into the hands of the Sultan whom he had betrayed. Mūsà sent him and the youngest of the three Lazarević brothers to the scaffold; but, with characteristic diplomacy, he spared the life of George Branković, who had shared the treachery of the others, in order that Stephen might still have a rival, and the Turks an ally, in his own household. Branković at first acted as the Sultan had anticipated, and the latter, at last triumphant over Sulaimān in 1410, invaded Serbia. In order to strike terror into the hearts of the Serbs, the barbarous invader butchered the entire garrison of three castles, and then ordered his meal to be spread upon their reeking corpses. Acts of this kind made Branković revolt from contact with such a monster. He abandoned the camp of Mūsà, was reconciled with Stephen, and thenceforth regarded his uncle as a father whose crown he would one day inherit. Together they aided Mahomet I, the most powerful of the Turkish claimants, to overthrow his brother. At the battle of Chamorlú near Samokov, on 10 July 1413, the fate of the Turkish Empire and with it that of the Balkan Slavs was decided. It was the lot of the two Serbian rulers, Stephen Lazarević and his nephew, to contribute, the one by the assistance of his subjects the other by his personal prowess, on that day to the consolidation of the Ottoman power, and thus inadvertently to prepare the way for the complete conquest of their country later on. Stephen, to whom some have assigned the command of the left wing, is known to have returned home

before the battle¹; but Branković dealt Mūsà the blow which caused him to flee from the field. The conqueror rewarded the Despot of Serbia with an increase of territory, and assured his envoys of his pacific intentions. Mahomet I was as good as his word; for the rest of his reign Serbia remained unmolested. Nor did his warlike successor Murād II attack that country as long as the diplomatic despot lived.

Another, and a Western, Power had now, however, obtained a footing in Serbian lands, thus exciting the protests of the despot in his later years. We saw that some fifty years earlier the family of Balša had established itself in the Zeta, where it had formed an independent state, the germ of the heroic principality of Montenegro, with Scutari as its capital. In 1396, however, George II Balša, hard pressed by the Turks, who had already once captured his residence, sold Scutari with its famous fortress of Rosafa, whose legendary foundation is enshrined in one of the most beautiful Serbian ballads and whose name recalls the Syrian home of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, together with the neighbouring castle of Drivasto, to the Venetian Republic. Three and four years earlier Venice had obtained possession of Alessio and Durazzo respectively; a few years later she occupied the sea-ports of Dulcigno, Antivari, and Budua; in 1420 the citizens of Cattaro, long anxious for Venetian protection against Balša on the one hand and the Bosnian barons, who had for a generation been their lords, on the other, at last induced her to take compassion upon their city; and that year found Venice mistress of practically all maritime Dalmatia, except where Castelnuovo, Almissa, and the republic of Ragusa formed an enclave in her territory. Finally, when in 1421 the last male representative of the Balša family died, Venice declined to recognise his maternal uncle, the Despot of Serbia, as his heir and cede to him the places which had once belonged to that race. Hostilities broke out, but it was finally agreed that Venice should keep Scutari, Cattaro, and Dulcigno, while Stephen should have Drivasto, Antivari, and Budua. The inhabitants of these three places found, however, that the republic could give them support against the Turks, which the Serbian rulers were unable to furnish. One after the other they begged to share the good-fortune of Cattaro, until at last in 1444 we find them all Venetian colonies². In the same year, the tiny republic of Poljica near Spalato, a "Slavonic San Marino," which had been founded by Bosnian fugitives in 944 and had received Hungarian *bans* from about 1350, placed herself under Venetian overlordship.

When Stephen Lazarević saw his end approaching, he recognised the suzerainty of Hungary over his land, as the only means of securing it from the Turks, and obtained from King Sigismund the formal confirmation of his nephew George Branković as his heir. Then, on 19 July 1427, he died, the last of his name. His tombstone at

¹ Gelcich and Thallóczy, *Diplomatarium*, p. 226.

² *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* xvii. p. 249; xxi. pp. 156-7, 190.

Drvenglave has survived the ravages of the foes whom he had seen divided, but whose power he had unwittingly helped to consolidate; his life is better known than that of far greater Serbian sovereigns, thanks to the fact that he found a biographer among his contemporaries. If, with pardonable exaggeration, the Ragusans¹ wrote of the just-departed despot as "the hammer and bulwark against the enemies of the Christian faith," modern research has shewn him to have been a stronger character than earlier historians had believed.

Meanwhile, the other surviving Slav state of the Balkan peninsula had suffered more than Serbia from the Turks without and also from a civil war within. The great Turkish invasion of 1398, which had "almost entirely ruined Bosnia," had convinced the Bosnian magnates that a woman was unfit to rule over their land. Headed by Hrvoje Vukčić, the king-maker of Bosnian history, they accordingly deposed Helena Gruba and elected Stephen Ostoja, probably an illegitimate son of the great Tvrtko, as their king. As long as Ostoja obeyed the dictates of his all-powerful vassal, who proudly styled himself "the grand *voivode* of the Bosnian kingdom and vicar-general of the most gracious sovereigns King Ladislav and King Ostoja," he kept his throne. Under Hrvoje's guidance he repulsed the attack of King Sigismund of Hungary, who had claimed the overlordship of Bosnia in accordance with the treaty of Djakovo, and endeavoured to recover Dalmatia and Croatia for the Bosnian crown under the pretext of supporting Sigismund's rival, Ladislav of Naples. But when the latter shewed by his coronation at Zara as King of both those lands that he had no intention of allowing them to become Bosnian possessions, Ostoja changed his policy, made his peace with Sigismund, and recognised him as his suzerain. The puppet-king had, however, forgotten his maker. Hrvoje, the "Bosnian kinglet," aided by the Ragusans, laid siege to the royal castle of Bobovac, where the king was residing; and, when Sigismund intervened on behalf of his vassal, summoned an assembly of the nobles in 1404 to depose Ostoja and choose a new sovereign. The assembled barons unanimously voted the expulsion of Ostoja, and elected Tvrtko's legitimate son, who had been passed over thirteen years before, under the title of Tvrtko II. All real authority, however, lay as before in the hands of Hrvoje, whom the grateful Ladislav had created Duke of Spalato and lord of Cattaro, whom Sigismund regarded as his "chief rival," whom a modern historian² has described as "the most powerful man between the Save and the Adriatic," and to whom the shrewd Ragusans wrote that "whatsoever thou dost command in Bosnia is done."³

A Hungarian invasion and a civil war followed the election of

¹ Gelcich and Thallóczy, *Diplomatarium*, p. 325.

² Klaić, *Geschichte Bosniens*, p. 294.

³ Pucić, *Spomenici srpski*, i. p. 59.

Tvrtko II, for Sigismund was resolved to restore his influence, while Ostoja still held out in Bobovac. After a first futile attempt, the Magyar monarch entered Bosnia in 1408; once again the walls of Dobor witnessed a Hungarian victory; the yellow waters of the Bosna were reddened by the headless corpses of more than a hundred Bosnian nobles, and Tvrtko II was led a prisoner to Buda. Hrvoje humbled himself before the victor, and Ladislav of Naples sold all his Dalmatian rights to Venice in despair. But Sigismund's schemes for extending Hungarian authority over Bosnia encountered the stubborn resistance of the national party, whose leaders came from the land of Hum, the cradle of so many insurrections against the foreigner. They restored Ostoja to the throne, and in their own stony country and in the south of Bosnia their candidate held out against the Hungarian sovereign, who dismembered the rest of the kingdom, and even bestowed Srebrenica, its most important mining-district, upon the Despot of Serbia, thus sowing discord between the two kindred peoples. Law and order ceased; members of the royal family took to highway robbery, and the Ragusans complained that even among the heathen Turks their traders met with less harm than in Christian Bosnia. The climax was reached when Sigismund, occupied with the religious quarrels of Western Europe, released Tvrtko in 1415, and sent him with a Hungarian army to recover the Bosnian crown. Hard pressed by this formidable combination (for Tvrtko's was a name to conjure with) his rival and Hrvoje, who had now rallied to Ostoja, committed the fatal mistake of summoning the Turks to their aid, thus setting an example which ultimately caused the ruin of Bosnia. The immediate result of this policy was, indeed, successful; the Magyars were routed, but the victors could not rid themselves of their Turkish allies so easily. In the very next year Mahomet I appointed his general Isaac governor of the district of Vrhbosna, which took its name from the "sources of the Bosna," and occupied the heart of the country. From the like-named castle, on the site of the present fortress of Sarajevo, the low-born Turkish viceroy could dominate the plain at his feet and confirm great Bosnian nobles in their fiefs by the grace of his, and their, master, the Sultan.

The joint authors of this Turkish occupation did not long survive the evil which they had inflicted on their country. In the same year that saw the Turkish garrison installed in Vrhbosna Hrvoje died. No Balkan noble is better known to us than this remarkable man. An ancient missal has preserved for us his features, and we are told of his gruff voice and rough manners which so greatly disgusted the courteous magnates of Hungary. The coins which he struck for his duchy of Spalato have survived, and the loveliest town in all Bosnia, the fairy-like Jajce ("the egg" of the Southern Slavs) will ever be connected with his name. There, on the egg-shaped hill above the magnificent waterfall, he had bidden an Italian architect build him a castle on the model of

the famous Castel dell' Uovo at Naples, and there he dug out those catacombs which still bear his arms and were intended to serve as his family vault¹. But the influence of this Bosnian king-maker perished with him; his widow became the wife of Ostoja, who, two years later, died himself; another great noble, the grand *voivode* Sandalj Hranić of the house of Kosača, once Hrvoje's most formidable rival, for nearly two decades wielded from his stronghold in the land of Hum the predominant authority over the south. He did not scruple, during the brief reign of Ostoja's feeble son and successor, Stephen Ostojić, to increase his estates by the aid of the Turkish garrison in Vrhbosna. Fortunately the death of "king" Isaac on a Hungarian raid ended for the moment the Turkish occupation. Stephen Ostojić did not, however, long profit by the liberation of his country from this terrible foe. Tvrtko II, who had disputed the throne with Ostoja, now once more arose to wrest it from Ostoja's son. His attempt succeeded; in 1421 Ostojić is heard of for the last time. Tvrtko II wore again the crown of his father, a crown which had, however, just lost that bright jewel which the first Tvrtko had added to it, the city of Cattaro and its splendid fiord. Only the "new castle" which the great king had built to command the mouth still remained in Bosnian hands, the powerful hands of Sandalj Hranić, and survived in those of his successors the downfall of the kingdom itself.

Wallachia, like Bosnia, had suffered from the armies of Mahomet I. After the defeat of Mîsă, the victorious Sultan sent an army to ravage the land of Mircea, who had previously sheltered his rival, and Mircea was forced to purchase peace by the promise of a tribute. The spirit of the Wallachian ruler chafed, however, at this fresh degradation. He welcomed the advent of a self-styled son of Bâyezîd, who claimed the Turkish throne, and supported his claim. The pretender was defeated, and Mircea paid for his temerity by a fresh Turkish inroad. In order to have a base for future action against Wallachia, Mahomet occupied the two Roumanian towns, Turnu-Severin and Giurgevo. Not long afterwards, in 1418, Mircea "the Great," as his countrymen call him, died, the first commanding figure in their troubled history. Unfortunately, "the Great" prince had won his crown by the murder of his elder brother, and his crime was now visited upon his heirs and his country. Wallachia was distracted by the civil wars of the rival cousins, who appealed with success to the jealousies of the nobles and to those misguided feelings of local patriotism which tended towards the separation of the smaller western from the larger eastern portion of the principality. In their eagerness to gain the throne, the hostile candidates called in now the Hungarians and now the Turks to their aid, and thus the resources of the country were weakened by almost constant bloodshed. Meanwhile, the sister-principality of Moldavia, after a number of

¹ *Wiss. Mitt.* II. pp. 94-107.

ephemeral reigns, found in Alexander the Good a prince who managed to maintain himself on the throne, albeit under the suzerainty of Poland, for nearly a whole generation. His administration, which lasted from 1401 to 1433, was devoted to the internal organisation of Moldavia and to the development of its resources. He regulated the tariff, prevented the export of the famous Moldave horses, upon which the defence of the country largely depended, established the official hierarchy of the Moldave nobles, and recognised the long-disputed authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch over the Moldavian Church. Hitherto both the Roumanian principalities had, with rare intervals, depended in ecclesiastical matters upon the ancient Church of Ochrida, an arrangement dating from the time of the first Bulgarian Empire, which had had the natural result of introducing Old Slavonic as the language of the Roumanian church services. Even at a time when Ochrida had long ceased to be Bulgarian and a Patriarchate, the jurisdiction of this archiepiscopal see over the distant Roumanian lands beyond the Danube was revived, and the literature of the Church and the official language of the princely chanceries still remained Slav. After Alexander's time the archbishopric of Ochrida recovered its authority, which Wallachia did not shake off till the end of the fifteenth, and Moldavia till the seventeenth century, when the Roumanian language, alike in Church and State, replaced the archaic idiom of the alien Slavs.

While such was the dubious plight of the Latins of the lower Danube, their neighbours, the Serbs, were being driven back upon that river under the pressure of the Turkish advance to the north. Originally a mountainous, and at its zenith a Macedonian state, Serbia under George Branković, except for a few places on the Adriatic, was essentially a Danubian principality, even to a greater degree than was till lately the case. The new despot, a fine, tall man of sixty when he at last succeeded his uncle, was an experienced diplomatist, whose life had been spent in those tortuous political manœuvres which passed in the Near East for the height of statesmanship. But something more than diplomacy was needed to defend the Balkan Christians from the Turks, now that a warlike Sultan in the person of Murād II directed their undivided forces. As soon as Murād had leisure to attend to Serbian affairs, he sent an embassy to the despot, demanding the whole of Serbia for himself, on the pretext that a sister of the late prince had married his father. George saw that his best policy was to, "pacify the dragon" by making some concessions, and thus to save at least a portion of his territory¹. He promised to sever all connexion with Hungary, to pay an annual tribute (not a difficult undertaking for a man of his great wealth), to furnish the usual military contingent to the Sultan's armies, and to give to the latter the hand of his daughter Maria with a dowry of Serbian land. Delay in the performance of this last condition brought upon Branković a Turkish

¹ Ducas, p. 205.

invasion. Kruševac, the residence of Prince Lazar, fell before the invaders, and ceased to be the Serbian capital; and the despot, when he had secured a respite by the betrothal of his daughter, humbly but astutely asked from her all-powerful suitor permission to build a new fortress at Smederevo, or Semendria, on the right bank of the Danube. The site was well chosen; for, if the Sultan was induced to approve of the construction of Semendria as a bulwark against Hungary, the despot could easily escape thence across the river, should his suzerain attack him there. The noble towers and ramparts of George Branković's castle, thenceforth the Serbian capital till the Turkish conquest, still stand by the brink of the great river; the cross of red brick which the master-builder defiantly built into the walls has survived the long centuries of the Crescent's domination; and the coins which the despot minted there commemorate the foundation of this great Danubian stronghold. In our own day, when Serbia feared the Austrian more than the Turk, it was a disadvantage to have the capital on the northern frontier; in the fifteenth century, when the Hungarian was the only hope of safety, it was the best choice. Branković, in order to secure for himself a comfortable refuge beyond the Danube, did not hesitate to hand over Belgrade itself, which his uncle had rendered even stronger than it was by nature, to the King of Hungary in exchange for a goodly list of towns and estates in that sovereign's territory. This act of enlightened selfishness was a sore blow to the Serbian people; it was a bitter humiliation to them to see "the white city" transferred to the authority of a Magyar commander. Nature herself seemed to protest against the cession of Belgrade; thunder rolled over the betrayed fortress; a tempest swept the roofs off the houses; and the citizens wept at the surrender of their homes to the foreigner from beyond the Save. More serious still, Murād was angry that so valuable a position should be in Hungarian hands. For the present, however, he contented himself with sending for his betrothed, who still lingered at her father's court. Branković, who had just received from the Greek Emperor the dignity and the emblems of despot, gave the bride a splendid outfit worthy of a king's daughter. The charms of the Serbian princess captivated the heart of the Sultan; but this matrimonial alliance, from which the Serbs might have expected much, availed nothing against reasons of state. Branković, as a French traveller¹ who visited him said, was "in daily fear of losing Serbia." His only safeguard was the Sultan's belief that tributary states were more profitable to Turkey than annexation.

Murād had not been many months married to the fair Serbian when one of those fanatics so common in Muslim lands accused him of sinning against Allāh by allowing the unbelievers to live in peace. The building of Semendria, so this man insisted, had been not only a crime but a blunder, for it barred the way to the conquest of Hungary and

¹ Bertrandon de la Brocquière, in *Recueil de voyages et de documents*, xii. 209-10.

of Italy beyond it—the ultimate goal of Musulman endeavour, which might be reached by means of the immense riches of the Serbian Despot. Murād listened to this counsel, and sent an ultimatum to his father-in-law, demanding the surrender of Semendria. Branković left his capital in charge of his eldest son Gregory and one of his Greek relatives, and crossed over with his youngest son Lazar into Hungary to obtain assistance. Semendria, strong as were its defences, had, however, provisions for no more than three months, so that before the pedantic bureaucracy of the Magyar army could be put in motion the garrison was compelled to yield. Gregory and his next brother Stephen, who had been forced to accompany Murād to the siege, were blinded at the instigation of the Sultan's fanatical adviser and deported to Asia Minor. From Semendria, where he left a Turkish guard, Murād marched to the rich mining town of Novobrdo, which a Byzantine historian calls "the mother of cities,"¹ and the minerals of which had been rented by the Ragusans for a large sum. Novobrdo was captured, and nearly all Serbia was in 1439 a Turkish province. Her lawful ruler was forced to seek refuge in the maritime towns of Antivari and Budua, which were still Serbian. Even there, however, the long arm of the Sultan menaced him; he fled with his vast treasures to the neighbouring republic of Ragusa, where he hoped to find a shelter on neutral ground. But Murād was still inexorable; he bade the embarrassed republicans banish their guest, and suggested that they might salve their consciences for this breach of hospitality by appropriating the 500,000 ducats which his father-in-law had deposited for safety in their public coffers. The Ragusans boldly refused to tarnish their honour at the Sultan's bidding, but they none the less hinted to their guest that he had better return to Hungary. Warned by this example, his last possessions on, or near, the Adriatic (Budua, Drivasto, and Antivari) sought and obtained from Venice that protection which he could no longer give them. Many noble Serbs settled at Ragusa, and that artistic city owes one of her most treasured relics, the cross of Stephen Uroš II, to this troubled period of South Slavonic history.

Belgrade, however, with its Hungarian garrison, still rose above the Ottoman flood which had swept over the rest of Serbia, and in 1440 Murād accordingly laid siege to it by land and water. The fortress was commanded by a Ragusan and provided with excellent artillery, which wrought such terrible havoc among the besiegers that neither the Turkish flotilla nor the janissaries could prevail against it. After wasting six months before the town, Murād reluctantly raised the siege with the sinister threat that sooner or later "the white city" must be his. It was not till eighty-one years after this first Turkish siege that his threat was accomplished by one of his greatest successors.

A new figure now arose to check for a time the Ottoman advance.

¹ Ducas, p. 209.

John Hunyadi, "the white knight of Wallachia," a Roumanian in the service of Hungary, began his victorious career with his appointment as *voivode* of Transylvania in 1441. After several preliminary defeats of the Turks on the slopes of the Carpathians and in the neighbourhood of Belgrade, he undertook with King Vladislav I in 1443 a great expedition across Serbia and Bulgaria. Both Pope Eugenius IV and Branković subsidised the undertaking, Vlad "the Devil" of Wallachia joined his countryman, while the exiled despot placed his local knowledge at the disposition of the dashing Roumanians. The Christian army rapidly traversed Serbia, burning Kruševac and Niš on the way, and entered Bulgaria, whose inhabitants received the Polish King of Hungary and the Slavs in his force as brothers. Leaving Sofia behind him, Hunyadi pressed on with his colleagues towards Philippopolis; but he found the pass near Zlatica already occupied by the janissaries whom Murād had assembled, and he had to retreat. On the return march, the despot, who was in command of the rear, was attacked by the Turks at Kunovica near Niš, but the cavalry came to his aid and completely routed his assailants. Murād, dismayed at this first great Hungarian raid across the Danube, and threatened by troubles in Asia, signed, in July 1444, the humiliating peace of Szegedin, which restored to Branković the whole of Serbia and his two blinded sons, on condition of his handing half the revenue of the land as tribute to the Sultan. Bulgaria remained a portion of the Turkish Empire, and the citizens of Sofia, which ten years earlier had been the most flourishing town in the whole country, lamented among the ashes of their ruined houses the vain attempt of the Christians to set them free. Their city, famous for its baths, became the residence of the "Beglerbeg of Rumelia," the viceroy of the Sultan in the Balkans. Wallachia, under Vlad "the Devil," continued to pay tribute to Turkey while acknowledging the suzerainty of Hungary, whose sovereign pledged himself not to cross the Danube against the Turks, just as the Sultan vowed likewise not to cross it against the Magyars. The only real gainer by the campaign of 1443 was George Branković, who received the congratulations of Venice on his fortunate restoration to the throne of Serbia¹. Honour and policy alike suggested the maintenance of this solemn treaty with the Turks.

But the parchment bond had scarcely been signed when the evil counsels of Cardinal Julian Cesarini, the papal legate, caused the Hungarian monarch to break it. The moment seemed to the statesmanship of the Vatican to have come for driving the Turks out of Europe. Murād was occupied in Asia, and it was thought that the fleets of the Duke of Burgundy and the Pope could prevent his return. In vain Branković argued against this impolitic act of treachery; Hunyadi, the soul of this new crusade, was eager to free Bulgaria in order to revive in his own person the Empire of the Tsars; the legate was ready to

¹ *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* xxi. pp. 186-7; Makusev, ii. pp. 81-4.

absolve Vladislav from the oath which he had so lately sworn. Not without forebodings of his approaching doom, the perjured King of Hungary re-crossed the forbidden river, set fire to Vidin, and, flushed by easy successes gained at the expense of the helpless peasantry whom he had come to liberate, disregarded the warning of the astute *voivode* of Wallachia and pushed on to the Black Sea. Thus far his expedition had been a triumphal march; but among the gardens and vineyards of Varna, the district which still preserves the name of the former Bulgarian Despot Dobrotich, he suddenly found himself confronted by the Turkish army. Murād had made peace with his enemies in Asia, and, thanks to a strong wind which had prevented the Christian vessels from leaving the Dardanelles, had crossed over to Europe at his ease where the Bosphorus is narrowest, and had reached Varna by forced marches. The battle which decided the fate of this last attempt of Christendom to free Bulgaria was fought on 10 November 1444. It is only a later, if picturesque, legend that Murād displayed before him on a lance his copy of the broken treaty¹, but when night fell the scattered remnant of the Christian army had good cause to lament alike the perjury and the rashness of its leader. At first the prowess of Hunyadi seemed to have broken the Ottoman ranks; but the young king, envious of the laurels of his more experienced commander, insisted on exposing his valuable life at a critical moment. His death was the signal for the defeat of his army; his evil adviser, the cardinal, perished in the carnage; the survivors fled either across the Danube into Wallachia, or westward to the fastnesses of Albania, where Skanderbeg a year earlier had begun to defy the Turks in his native mountains. Hunyadi was treacherously captured by the Wallachian "Devil," whom he had accused of double-dealing during the campaign, but was released on the arrival of a Hungarian ultimatum. Two years later he wreaked his vengeance upon his captor, whom he deprived of both crown and life, restoring the elder branch of the Wallachian princely house to the throne which Mircea and his descendants had usurped from his brother and his brother's children.

George Branković, wise in his generation, had refused to take part in the expedition which had ended so disastrously at Varna. Like the shrewd diplomatist that he was, he had made his calculations in the event of either a Hungarian or a Turkish victory. In the former case he relied on his money to shelter him from the consequences of his neutrality; against the latter he made provision by sending news of the Christian advance to the Sultan and by barring the road by which Skanderbeg was to have traversed Serbia on his way to join the Christian forces at Varna. He persisted in the same policy of enlightened selfishness when, four years later, Hunyadi again attacked the Turks. On this occasion, too, Branković betrayed the Christian cause by warning Murād

¹ Zinkeisen, I. p. 702, n. 3.

of the coming Hungarian invasion, and refused to participate in an expedition which he considered inadequate for the purpose intended. Hunyadi stormed, and vowed vengeance upon him, but once more facts proved the shrewd old Serb to be right. The armies met on the fatal field of Kossovo on 17 October 1448, while the Serbs lurked in the mountain passes which led out of the plain, ready to fall upon and plunder the fugitives. On the first and second days the issue was uncertain; but, when the fight was renewed on the third, the Roumanian contingent, whose leader owed his throne to Hunyadi, deserted in a body to the Turks. Murād, however, suspecting this movement to be a feint, ordered them to be cut to pieces. Nevertheless, their defection demoralised their chivalrous countryman, who fled for his life towards Belgrade. His danger was great, for Branković, anxious to obtain possession of a man whom he hated and whom he could then surrender to the Sultan, had ordered the Serbs to examine and report to the authorities every Hungarian subject whom they met, while the Turks were also on his track. Once, like Marius, he hid himself among the reeds of a marsh; then he narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of two Serbian guides; at last, driven by hunger, he was forced to disclose his identity to a Serbian peasant. The peasant revealed the secret to his brothers, one of the latter reported it to the local governor, and Hunyadi was sent in chains to Semendria. The despot durst not, however, provoke the power of Hungary by refusing to release so distinguished a champion of Christendom, and his captive recovered his freedom by promising to pay a ransom and never to lead an army across Serbia again. Not only did these promises remain unfulfilled, but, as soon as Hunyadi was free, he revenged himself by seizing the Branković estates in Hungary and by devastating Serbian territory.

But the Serbian Despot's armed neutrality while others fought at Varna and Kossovo was not his only crime against the common cause of the Balkan Christians. Despite his years and the imminent Turkish peril, he did not scruple to extend his frontiers at the expense of Bosnia with the Sultan's permission. Tvrtko II had not long enjoyed in peace his restoration to the Bosnian throne. His title was disputed by Radivoj, a bastard son of Ostoja, who summoned Murād II to his aid, and Tvrtko was forced to purchase peace by the cession of several towns to the Sultan, already the real arbiter of Bosnia. In 1433 the puppet king was overthrown by a combination between Branković and the powerful Bosnian magnate, Sandalj Hranić, who paid the Sultan a lump sum for his gracious permission to partition the Bosnian kingdom. The despot thereupon annexed the district of Usora, watered by the lower Bosna, while the grand *voivode* ruled over the whole of what was soon to be called the Herzegovina, and a part of what is now Montenegro. Hranić might claim to be *de facto*, if not *de jure*, the successor of the great Tvrtko, for the monastery in which the first Bosnian king

had been crowned, and the castle which he had built to command the fird of Cattaro, were both his. But the opposition of the barons hindered, and his death in 1435 ended, his striving after the royal title. His vast territories passed to his nephew, Stephen Vukčić, the last of the three great Bosnian magnates whose commanding figures overshadowed the pigmy wearers of the crown. His land was now regarded as independent of Bosnia; ere long, despite a Bosnian protest, he received, either from the Emperor Frederick III or from the Pope, the title of "Duke of St Sava," which, in its German form of *Herzog*, gave to the Herzegovina its name¹. Meanwhile, in 1436, a Turkish garrison re-occupied Vrhbosna, and Tvrtko II, who had sought refuge in Hungary, recovered his throne by consenting to pay a tribute of 25,000 ducats to the Sultan. He had not, however, been long re-installed when the Turkish invasion of Serbia up to the gates of Belgrade seemed to forebode the annexation of Bosnia also. In his despair he implored now Venice, now Vladislav I, the Polish King of Hungary, to take compassion upon him. Venice he begged to take over the government of his dominions, Vladislav he urged to succour a land whose people were also Slavs. But the diplomatic republic declined the dangerous honour with complimentary phrases, while Tvrtko did not live long enough to witness the fulfilment of the Hungarian monarch's promise to aid him. In 1443 he was murdered by his subjects, and with him the royal house of Kotromanić became extinct. In his place the magnates elected another bastard son of Ostoja, Stephen Thomas Ostojić, as their king.

Stephen Thomas began his reign by taking a step which had momentous consequences for his kingdom. Although his predecessor had been a Roman Catholic, his own family was, like most of the Bosnian nobles of that time, devoted to the Bogomile heresy, which had come to be regarded as the national religion. The new king came, however, to the conclusion that he would not only enhance his personal prestige at home, diminished by his illegitimate birth and his humble marriage, but would also gain the assistance of the West against the Turks, if he embraced the Roman Catholic faith. But, although he had none of the fervour of a convert from conviction, he soon found that the erection of Roman Catholic churches did not satisfy the zeal of the Franciscans, of his protector Hunyadi, and of the Pope. Accordingly in 1446 an assembly of prelates and barons met at Konjica,

¹ It is usually supposed that Vukčić received the ducal title either from Frederick III in 1443, or from the Pope in 1449, when he turned Roman Catholic, or else from the King of Aragon (*Wiss. Mitt.* lxx. pp. 503-9; x. p. 103 n.; Klaić, p. 382). But he is styled *dux terre Huminis* as early as 23 August 1445 (*Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* xxi. p. 226), "Duke of St Sava" in a document of 1446 (Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum*, iv. p. 68), and "Duke" in a dubious inscription of that year (*Wiss. Mitt.* lxx. p. 502). A less probable theory (*ib.* i. p. 434) derives the name of the Herzegovina from a Turkish word meaning "the land of stones." Thallóczy (*Studien zur Gesch. Bosniens u. Serbiens*, pp. 146-59) thinks that he took the title himself with the connivance of the Porte.

the beautiful town on the borders of the Herzegovina through which the traveller now passes on the railway from Sarajevo to Mostar. It was there decided that the Bogomiles "shall neither build new churches nor restore those that are falling into decay," and that "the goods of the Catholic Church shall never be taken from it."¹ No less than 40,000 of the persecuted sect emigrated to the Herzegovina in consequence of this decree, and found there a refuge beneath the sway of Duke Stephen, who, although he had allowed his daughter Catherine to embrace Catholicism and marry Stephen Thomas, remained himself a Bogomile. Thus, if the King of Bosnia had, by his conversion, gained a divorce from his low-born consort and had become the son-in-law of the powerful magnate whose sovereign he claimed to be, if he had been taken under the protection of the Holy See and had secured the support of the famous Wallachian hero, he had estranged a multitude of his own subjects, whose defection involved him in a war with his heretical father-in-law, and hastened the downfall of Bosnian independence. Moreover, the old Despot of Serbia continued to harass his eastern frontier, so long a source of discord between the two sister-states; while, as if that were not enough, this embarrassed successor of the great Tvrtko must needs try to make good his mighty predecessor's title of "King of Dalmatia and Croatia," regardless of the hard fact that what should have been in theory the natural sea-frontage of his inland kingdom had become a long and practically unbroken line of Venetian colonies. Such was the behaviour of the Balkan leaders when in 1451 their destined conqueror, Mahomet II, ascended the throne.

It was the policy of the new Sultan to humour the Balkan princes until the capture of Constantinople left him free to subdue them one by one. He not only renewed his father's treaty with Serbia, but sent his Serbian stepmother back to her father with every mark of distinction, assigning her sufficient estates to support her in her widowhood. The consequence was that George Branković assisted him to amuse the Hungarians till the capital of the Byzantine Empire fell, and contributed nothing to the defence of those walls which only five years before he had helped to repair². When the fatal news arrived, the wily despot and the terrified King of Bosnia hastened to send envoys to make the best terms that they could with the conqueror. For the moment Mahomet contented himself with a tribute of 12,000 ducats from Serbia; but he had already made up his mind to put an end to the autonomy which that rich and fertile country, the stepping-stone to Hungary and Wallachia, had been permitted to enjoy for the last two generations. In the spring of 1454 he sent an ultimatum to the despot, bidding him, under threat of invasion, surrender at once the former land of Stephen Lazarević, to which he had no right, and promising him in

¹ Farlati, *l.c.*

² Inscription on the walls of Constantinople. Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica*, p. 441.

return the ancestral territory of the Branković family with the city of Sofia. Only twenty-five days were allowed for the receipt of his answer. George was, however, absent in Hungary when the ultimatum reached Semendria, and his crafty officials managed to detain its bearer until they had had time to place the fortresses on a war footing. Before the Sultan could reach the Serbian frontier, Hunyadi had made a dash across the Danube, had penetrated as far as the former Bulgarian capital, and had retired with his plunder beyond the river. Mahomet's main object was the capture of Semendria, the key of Hungary, but that strong castle resisted his attack, and he withdrew to Hadrianople. In the following year he repeated his invasion, and forced Novobrdó to surrender after a vigorous and protracted bombardment. A portion of the inhabitants he left there to work the famous silver mines, which, as his biographer remarks, had not only largely contributed to the former splendour of the Serbian Empire but had also aroused the covetousness of its enemies. Indeed, the picture which Critobulus¹ has drawn of Serbia in her decline might kindle the admiration of her modern statesmen as they read of the "cities many and fair in the interior of the land, the strong forts on the banks of the Danube," the "productive soil," the "swine and cattle and abundant breed of goodly steeds," with which this little Balkan state, so blessed by nature, so cursed by politics, was bountifully endowed. But the "numerous and valiant youths" who had been the pride of the old Serbian armies had been either drafted into the corps of janissaries to fight against their fellow-Christians, or were helpless, in the absence of their aged and fugitive prince, against the artillery of Mahomet. The summer was, however, fast drawing to a close; Serbia gained another brief respite, and George to his surprise obtained peace on the basis of *uti possidetis* and the payment of a smaller tribute for his diminished territory.

In June 1456 Mahomet appeared with a large park of heavy artillery before the gates of Belgrade, boasting that within a fortnight the city should be his. So violent was the bombardment that the noise of the Turkish guns was heard as far off as Szegecin, and the Sultan hoped that all succour from that quarter would be prevented by his fleet, which was stationed in the Danube. But Hunyadi routed the unwieldy Turkish ships, and made his way into the beleaguered town with an army of peasant crusaders, whom the blessing of Calixtus III and the preaching of the fiery Franciscan Capistrano had assembled for this holy war. Enthusiasm compensated for their defective weapons; when the janissaries took the outer city, they not only drove them back, but, headed by the inspired chaplain, charged right up to the mouths of the Turkish cannon; Mahomet himself was wounded in the struggle, and retreated in disorder to Sofia, while the Serbian miners from Novobrdó fell upon his defeated troops. Unfortunately, the pestilence

¹ II. ch. 7.

that broke out in the Hungarian camp and the death of Hunyadi prevented the victors from following up their advantage. Belgrade was saved for Hungary, but the rest of Serbia was doomed. Even at this crisis, the quarrels of the despot and Hunyadi's brother-in-law Szilágyi, the governor of Belgrade, demonstrated the disunion and selfishness of the Christian leaders. The despot, who tried to entrap his enemy, was himself captured: and, although he was released, died not long afterwards on 24 December 1456, of the effect of a wound which he had received in the encounter. His ninety years had been spent in a troublesome time; his character had been rather of the willow than of the oak, and the one principle, if indeed it was not policy, which he consistently maintained, was his refusal to gain the warmer support of the West by abandoning the creed of his fathers and his subjects, as he had abandoned the cause of the other Balkan Christians to keep his own throne.

George Branković had bequeathed the remnant of his principality to his Greek wife Irene and his youngest son Lazar; for his two elder sons, Gregory and Stephen, had been blinded by Murād II. But the new despot chafed at the idea of sharing his diminished inheritance with his mother; indeed, he had refused to ransom his old father from captivity, in order to anticipate by a few months his succession to the throne. The death of Irene occurred at such an opportune moment and under such suspicious circumstances that it was attributed to poison administered by her ambitious son; and his eldest brother and his sister, the widow of the late Sultan, were so greatly alarmed for their own safety that they fled the selfsame day with all their portable property to the court of Mahomet II. That great man treated the fugitives with generosity; they obtained a home near Seres, where the former Sultana became the good angel of the Christians, obtaining through her influence permission for the monks of Rila to transport the remains of their pious founder from Trnovo to the great Bulgarian monastery which bears his name. Lazar III was now sole ruler of Serbia, for his second brother Stephen soon followed the rest of the family into exile, and became a pensioner of the Pope. But he did not long profit by his cruelty. While he allowed the internal affairs of his small state to fall into confusion, he was lax in paying the tribute which he had promised to his suzerain. Mahomet was preparing to attack this weak yet presumptuous vassal; when, on 20 January 1458, the latter died, leaving a widow and three daughters. Before his death, Lazar had provided for the succession by affiancing one of his children to Stephen Tomašević, son and heir of the King of Bosnia—an arrangement which would have united the two Serbian states in the person of the future Bosnian ruler, and seemed to promise a final settlement of the disputes that had latterly divided them.

Three candidates for the Serbian throne now presented themselves,

Stephen Tomašević, a son of Gregory Branković, and Mahomet II. None could doubt which of the three would be ultimately successful; but at first the Bosniak gained ground. In December 1458 King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary in a parliament at Szegedin formally recognised him as Despot of Serbia, that is to say of as much of that country as was not occupied by the Turks. Meanwhile, in order to strengthen herself, as she thought, against the latter, the widowed princess, a daughter of the Despot Thomas Palaeologus, had offered the principality as a fief to the Holy See. The marriage of the Serbian heiress and the Bosnian crown-prince took place; the commandant of Semendria was sent in irons to Hungary; and Stephen Tomašević took up his abode in the capital of George Branković. But the inhabitants of Semendria regarded their new master, a zealous Catholic and a Hungarian nominee, as a worse foe than the Sultan himself. They opened their gates to the Turks; the other Serbian towns followed their example; and, before the summer of 1459 was over, all Serbia, except Belgrade, had become a Turkish pashalik.

The history of medieval Serbia was thus closed; but members of the Branković family continued, with the assent of the kings of Hungary, to bear the title of despot in their Hungarian exile, whither many of their Serbian adherents had followed them and where their house became extinct just 200 years ago. Belgrade was able, in Hungarian hands, to resist repeated Turkish attacks till 1521, while the Serbian Patriarchs did not emigrate from Ipek to Karlovic till 1690. But from the time of Mahomet II to that of Black George in the early years of the nineteenth century, the noblest representatives of the Serbs were to be found fighting for their freedom among the barren rocks of what is now Montenegro.

The kingdom of Bosnia survived by only four years the fall of Serbia. In 1461 Stephen Thomas was slain by his brother Radivoj and his own son Stephen Tomašević, who thus succeeded to the sorry heritage of the Bosnian throne, of which he was to be the last occupant. The new king depicted to Pope Pius II in gloomy but not exaggerated colours the condition of his country, and begged the Holy Father to send him a crown and bid the King of Hungary accompany him to the wars, for so alone could Bosnia be saved. He told how the Turks had built several fortresses in his kingdom, and how they had gained the sympathy of the peasants by their kindness and promises of freedom. He pointed out that Bosnia was not the final goal of Mahomet's vaulting ambition; that Hungary and the Dalmatian possessions of Venice would be the next step, whence by way of Carniola and Istria he would march into Italy and perhaps to Rome. To this urgent appeal the Pope replied by sending his legates to crown him king. The coronation took place in the picturesque town of Jajce, Hrvoje's ancient seat, whither the new sovereign had transferred his residence from

Bobovac for greater security. The splendour of that day, the first and last occasion when a Bosnian king received his crown from Rome, and the absolute unanimity of the great nobles in support of their lord (for on the advice of Venice he had made peace with the Duke of St Sava, whose son was among the throng round the throne) cast a final ray of light over this concluding page of Bosnia's history as a kingdom. Stephen Tomašević assumed all the pompous titles of his predecessors—the sovereignty of Serbia, Bosnia, the land of Hum, Dalmatia, and Croatia—at a time when Serbia was a Turkish pashalik, when a Turkish governor ruled over the "Bosnian province" of Foča, and when the self-styled "King of Dalmatia" was imploring the Venetians to give him a place of refuge on the Dalmatian coast! There was still, too, one Christian enemy whom he had not appeased. The King of Hungary had never forgiven the surrender of Semendria, and had never forgotten the ancient Hungarian claim to the overlordship of Bosnia. He resented the Pope's recognition of Stephen Tomašević as an independent sovereign, and was only appeased by pecuniary and territorial concessions, and by a promise that the King of Bosnia would pay no more tribute to the Sultan. This last condition sealed the Bosniak's fate.

When Mahomet II learnt that Tomašević had promised to refuse the customary tribute, he sent an envoy to demand payment. The Bosnian monarch took the envoy into his treasury, and shewed him the money collected for the tribute, telling him, however, at the same time that he was not anxious to send the Sultan so much treasure. "For in case of war with your master," he argued, "I should be better prepared if I have money; and, if I must flee to another land, I shall live more pleasantly by means thereof."¹ The envoy reported to Mahomet what the king had said, and Mahomet resolved to punish this breach of faith. In the spring of 1463 he assembled a great army at Hadrianople for the conquest of Bosnia. Alarmed at the result of his own defiant refusal, Tomašević sent an embassy at the eleventh hour to ask for a fifteen years' truce. Michael Konstantinović, a Serbian renegade, who was an eye-witness of these events, has preserved the striking scene of Mahomet's deceit. Concealed behind a money-chest in the Turkish treasury, he heard the Sultan's two chief advisers decide upon the plan of campaign: to grant the truce and then forthwith march against Bosnia, before the King of Hungary and the Croats could come to the aid of that notoriously difficult and mountainous country. Their advice was taken; the Bosnian envoys were deceived; and even when the eavesdropper warned them that the Turkish army would follow on their heels, they still believed the word of the Sultan. Four days after their departure Mahomet set out. Ordering the Pasha of Serbia to prevent the King of Hungary from effecting a junction with the Bosniaks, he marched with such rapidity and secrecy that he found the Bosnian

¹ Laónikos Chalcocondyles, p. 532.

frontier undefended and met with little or no resistance until he reached the ancient castle of Bobovac. The fate of the old royal residence was typical of that of the land. Its governor, Prince Radak, a Bogomile forcibly converted to Catholicism, could have defended the fortress for years if his heart had been in the cause. But, like so many of his countrymen, he was a Bogomile first and a Bosniak afterwards. On the third day of the siege he opened the gates to Mahomet, who found among the inmates the two envoys whom he had so lately duped. Radak met with the fitting reward of his treachery, for when he claimed his price the Sultan ordered him to be beheaded. The giant cliff of Radakovica served as the scaffold, and still preserves the name, of the traitor of Bobovac.

At the news of Mahomet's invasion, Stephen Tomašević had withdrawn with his family to his capital of Jajce, hoping to raise an army and get help from abroad while the invader was expending his strength before the strong walls of Bobovac. But its surrender left him no time for defence. He fled at once towards Croatia, closely pursued by the van of the Turkish army. At the fortress of Ključ (one of the "keys" of Bosnia) the pursuers came up with the fugitive, whose presence inside was betrayed to them. Their commander promised the king in writing that if he surrendered his life should be spared, whereupon Tomašević gave himself up, and was brought as a prisoner to the Sultan at Jajce. Meanwhile, the capital had thrown itself upon the mercy of the conqueror, and thus, almost without a blow, the three strongest places in Bosnia had fallen. The wretched king himself helped the Sultan to complete his conquest. He wrote, at his captor's dictation, letters to all his captains, bidding them surrender their towns and fortresses to the Turks. In a week more than seventy obeyed his commands, and before the middle of June 1463 Bosnia was practically a Turkish pashalik, and Mahomet, with the captive king in his train, was able to set out for the subjugation of the Herzegovina. But the Turkish cavalry was useless against the bare limestone rocks on which the castles were perched, while the natives, accustomed to every cranny of the crags, harassed the strangers with a ceaseless guerrilla warfare. The duke and his son Vladislav, who only a few months before had intrigued with the Sultan against his own father, now fought side by side against the common foe, and Mahomet, after a fruitless attempt to capture the ducal capital of Blagaj, withdrew to Constantinople. But before he left he resolved to rid himself of the King of Bosnia, who could be of no further use and might be a danger. It was true that the Sultan's lieutenant had promised to spare the prisoner's life; but a learned Persian was found to pronounce the pardon to be invalid because it had been granted without Mahomet's previous consent. The trembling captive, with his written pardon in his hands, was summoned to the presence, whereupon the lithe Persian drew his sword and cut off Tomašević's head. The body of the last

King of Bosnia was buried by the Sultan's orders at a spot on the right bank of the river Vrbas only just visible from the citadel of Jajce, where, in 1888, the skeleton was discovered, the skull severed from the trunk. The remains of the ill-fated monarch are now to be seen in the Franciscan church there, his portrait adorns the Franciscan monastery of Sutjeska, but the *fetva*, which was carved on the city gate of Jajce to excuse the Sultan's breach of faith by representing his victim as a traitor ("the true believer will not allow a snake to bite him twice from the same hole") vanished some seventy years ago. The king's uncle Radivoj and his cousin were executed after him; his two half-brothers were carried off as captives; and his widow Maria became the wife of a Turkish official¹. But his stepmother Catherine escaped to Ragusa and Rome, where she received a pension from the Pope. There, in the midst of a little colony of faithful Bosniaks, she died on 25 October 1478, after bequeathing her kingdom to the Holy See, unless her two children, who had become converts to Islām, should return to the Catholic faith. A monument with a dubious Latin inscription in the church of Ara Coeli and a fresco in the Santo Spirito hospital still preserve the memory of the Bosnian queen, far from the last resting-place of her husband by the banks of the Trstivnica.

Even although Bosnia had fallen, the Turks were not allowed undisturbed possession. In the same autumn the King of Hungary entered Bosnia from the north, while Duke Stephen's son Vladislav attacked the Turkish garrisons in the south. Before winter had begun Matthias Corvinus was master of Jajce, and even the return of Mahomet in the following spring failed to secure its second surrender. Such was the terror of the Hungarian king's arms that the mere report of his approach made the Sultan raise the siege. Matthias Corvinus then organised the part of Bosnia which he had conquered from the Turks into two provinces, or *banats*, one of which took its name from Jajce, and the other from Srebrenik. Over these territories, which embraced all lower Bosnia, he placed Nicholas of Ilok, a Hungarian magnate, with the title of king, not however borne by his successors². Under Hungarian rule, these two Bosnian *banats* remained free from the Turks till 1528 and 1520 respectively—serving as a buffer-state between the Ottoman Empire and the Christian lands of Croatia and Slavonia.

The Herzegovina, which had repulsed the conqueror of Bosnia, did not long maintain its independence. The great Duke Stephen Vukčić, after losing nearly all his land in another Turkish invasion caused by the aid he had given in the recovery of Jajce, died in 1466, leaving all his possessions to be divided equally between his three sons, Vladislav, Vlatko, and Stephen³. The eldest, however, whose quarrels with his

¹ Hopf, *Chroniques*, p. 333; *Historia Politica*, p. 83; *Wiss. Mitt.* III. p. 384.

² Makusev, II. p. 95.

³ *Ibid.* II. p. 104; Hopf, *Chroniques*, pp. 333, 335.

father had wrought such infinite harm to his country, did not long govern the upper part of the Herzegovina which fell to his share; he entered the Venetian service, and thence emigrated to Hungary where he died. Accordingly, the second brother, Vlatko, assumed the title of Duke of St Sava, and re-united for a time all his father's estates under his sole rule, relying now on Venetian and now on Neapolitan aid, but only secure as long as Mahomet II allowed him to linger on as a tributary of Turkey. In 1481 he even ventured to invade Bosnia, but was driven back to seek shelter in his strong castle of Castelnuovo. Two years later Bāyazīd II annexed the Herzegovina, whose last reigning duke died in the Dalmatian island of Arbe. The title continued, however, to be borne as late as 1511 by Vladislav's son Balša¹. Stephen, the youngest of old Duke Stephen's three sons, had a far more remarkable career. Sent while still a child as a hostage to Constantinople, he embraced the creed and entered the service of the conqueror. Under the name of Aḥmad Pasha Hercegović, or "the Duke's son," he gained a great place in Turkish history, and, after having governed Anatolia and commanded the Ottoman fleet, attained to the post of Grand Vizier. His name and origin are still preserved by the little town of Hersek, on the Gulf of Izmid, near which, far from the strong duchy of his father, he found a grave.

The fall of the Bosnian kingdom is full of meaning for our own time. The country is naturally strong, and under the resolute government of one man, uniting all creeds and classes under his banner, might have held out like Montenegro against the Turkish armies. But the jealousies of the too powerful nobles who overshadowed the elective monarchy, and the still fiercer rivalries of the Roman Catholics and the Bogomiles, prepared the way for the invader, and when he came the persecuted heretics welcomed him as a deliverer, preferring "the mufti's turban to the cardinal's hat." Most of the Bogomiles embraced Īslām, and became in the course of generations more fanatical than the Turks themselves; they had preferred to be conquered by the Sultan rather than converted by the Pope; and, when once they had been conquered, they did not hesitate to be converted also. The Musulman creed possessed not a few points of resemblance with their own despised heresy, while it conferred upon those who embraced it the practical advantage of retaining their lands and their feudal privileges. Thus Bosnia, in striking contrast to Serbia, presents us with the curious phenomenon of an aristocratic caste, Slav by race yet Muslim by religion, whose members were the permanent repositories of power, while the Sultan's viceroy in his residencies of Vrhbosna, Banjaluka, or Travnik, was, with rare exceptions, a mere fleeting figure, here to-day and gone to-morrow. In fact, Bosnia remained under the Turks what she had been in the days of her kings, an aristocratic republic with a titular

¹ Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi*, p. 388; *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* vi. pp. 114, 126.

head, who was thenceforth a foreigner instead of a native; while the Bosnian *bey*s were in many cases the descendants of these medieval nobles who had lived in feudal state within their grey castle walls, whose rare intervals of leisure from the fierce joys of civil war were soothed by the music of the piper and amused by the skill of the *jongleur*, and who, unlike the rougher magnates of the more primitive Serbian court, received some varnish of western civilisation from their position as honorary citizens and honoured guests of Ragusa, "the South-Slavonic Athens." But, besides these converted Bogomiles, there remained in the midst of Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats some who adhered to the ancient doctrines of that maligned sect, and it is said that only a few years before the Austrian occupation a family named Helež, living near Konjica, abandoned the "Bogomile madness" for the Muslim faith. Their bitter enemies, the Roman Catholics, at first emigrated in numbers to the territories of adjacent Catholic Powers, till a Franciscan prevailed upon Mahomet II to stop the depopulation of the country by granting them the free exercise of their religion in what was thenceforth for four centuries the border-land between the Cross and the Crescent, the home of "the lion that guards the gates of Stamboul."

The Turkish conquest of Bosnia was followed, after a desperate struggle, by that of Albania. That mysterious land, whose sons are probably the oldest race in the Balkan peninsula, had been divided upon the collapse of the great Serbian Empire between a number of native chieftains, over whom Carlo Thopia exercised, with the title of "Prince of Albania," a species of hegemony for a whole generation. After his death, Albania was split up among rival clans who acknowledged no common head, and seemed inevitably destined to one of two fates—that of a Turkish province or that of a Venetian protectorate. At first there appeared to be some hope of the latter alternative. The republic began her career as an Albanian power with the acquisition of Durazzo in 1392; Alessio, "its right eye," was annexed as a matter of necessity in the next year; then followed in succession Scutari and Drivasto, Dulcigno and Antivari, all acquisitions from the Balša family, and finally, in 1444, Satti and Dagno on the left bank of the Drin. At that time the whole Albanian coast as far south as Durazzo was Venetian, and the Albanian coast-towns were so many links in the chain which united Venetian Dalmatia with Venetian Corfù. The Adriatic was, what it has never been again, an Italian lake. It was not, however, the policy, nor indeed within the power, of the purely maritime republic to conquer the interior of a country so difficult and so unproductive. It was her object to save expense alike of men and money, and she saved the former by devoting a little of the latter to subsidising the native chieftains in order that they might act as a bulwark against the Turks. But the brute force of the Turkish arms proved to be too strong even for such astute diplomatists as the Venetians and such

splendid fighters as the Albanians. As early as 1414 the Turks began to establish themselves as masters of Albania, and for nearly twenty years the castle of Kroja, soon to be immortalised by the brave deeds of Skanderbeg, was the seat of a Turkish governor. The national hero of Albania, whose name is still remembered throughout a land which has practically no national history except the story of his career, was of Serbian origin¹. His uncle had, however, married an heiress of the great Thopia clan, and had thus acquired, together with the fortress of Kroja, some of the prestige attached to the leading family of Albania. Then came the Turkish invasion, and George Castriota, the future redeemer of his country, was sent as a youthful hostage to Constantinople. The lad was educated in the faith of Islām, and received the Turkish name of Iskander, or "Alexander," with the title of *beg*, subsequently corrupted by his countrymen into the form of Skanderbeg, under which he is known as one of the great captains of history. For many years he fought in the Turkish ranks against Venetians and Serbs, leaving to Arianites Comnenus, a prominent Albanian chief, the futile task of trying to drive out the Ottoman garrisons from his native land. At last, in 1443, while serving in the Turkish army which had been defeated by Hunyadi's troops near Niš, he received the news of a fresh Albanian rising. Realising that his hour had come, he hastened to Kroja, made himself master of the fortress, which was thenceforth his capital, abjured the errors of Islām, and proclaimed a new crusade against the Turks. His personal influence was increased by a marriage with the daughter of Arianites; the other chiefs rallied round him; the Montenegrins flocked to his aid; and at a great gathering of the clans held on Venetian soil at Alessio he was proclaimed Captain-General of Albania. Venice, at first hostile to this new rival of her influence there, took him into her pay as a valuable champion against the common enemy, and soon Christendom heard with delighted surprise that an Albanian chief had forced the victor of Varna and Kossovo to retreat from the castle-rock of Kroja. The Pope and the King of Naples hastened to assist the tribesmen, who were both good Catholics and near neighbours, while the king dreamed of reviving the claims of the Neapolitan Angevins beyond the Adriatic, and even received the homage of Skanderbeg.

Mahomet II was, however, a more formidable adversary than his predecessor. He played upon the jealousy of the other Albanian chiefs, and his troops utterly routed an allied army of natives and Neapolitans. For the moment Skanderbeg seemed to have disappeared, but he soon rallied the Albanians to his side; fresh victories attended his arms, until in 1461 the Sultan concluded with him an armistice for ten years, and the land had at last a sorely-needed interval from war. But the peace had lasted barely two years when Skanderbeg, at the instigation

¹ Hopf, *Chroniques*, p. 334.

of Pope Pius II, broke his plighted word and drew his sword against the Turks. The death of the Pope caused the failure of the projected crusade; and Skanderbeg found himself abandoned by Europe and left to fight single-handed against the infuriated Sultan whom he had deceived. In the spring of 1466 Mahomet himself undertook the siege of Kroja; but that famous fortress baffled him as it had baffled his father, and Skanderbeg journeyed to Rome, where a lane near the Quirinal still commemorates his name and visit, to obtain help from Paul II. With the following spring the Sultan returned to the siege of Kroja, only once again to find it impregnable. But his valiant enemy's career was over; on 17 January 1468 Skanderbeg died¹ in the Venetian colony of Alessio. Thereupon the Turks easily conquered all Albania, with the exception of the castle of Kroja, occupied by Venice after Skanderbeg's death, and of the other Venetian stations. Ten years later, the disastrous war between the republic and the Sultan brought Kroja, Alessio, Dagno, Satti, and Drivasto under Turkish rule until 1512; the peace of 1479 surrendered Scutari; in 1501 Durazzo, and in 1571 Antivari and Dulcigno, the two ports of modern Montenegro, were finally taken by the Turks, and the flag of St Mark disappeared from the Albanian coast. To-day, a part of the castle of Scutari, a mutilated lion there, a Venetian grave and escutcheon at Alessio, and a few old houses and coats-of-arms at Antivari and Dulcigno, are almost the sole remains of that Venetian tenure of the Albanian littoral which modern Italy was anxious to revive. Skanderbeg's memory, however, still lives in his own land. Although his son and many other Albanian chiefs emigrated to the kingdom of Naples, where large Albanian colonies still preserve their speech, a *soi-disant* Castrioti has in our own day claimed the Albanian throne on the strength of his alleged descent from the hero of Kroja. If his grave in the castle of Alessio has disappeared, the ruins of the castle which he built on Cape Rodoni still stand to remind the passing voyager that Albania was once a nation. And, even under Turkish rule, the Roman Catholic Mirdites preserved their autonomy under a prince of the house of Doda, still wearing mourning for Skanderbeg, still obeying the unwritten code of Lek Ducagin.

Serbia, Bosnia, and Albania had successively fallen, but there was another land, barren indeed and mountainous, but all the more a natural fortress, which sheltered the Orthodox Serbs in this, the darkest hour of their history, and which the Turks have in vain tried to conquer permanently. We saw how the Balša family had established a century earlier an independent principality in what is now Montenegro, and how upon the death of the last male of that house in 1421 his chief cities had been partitioned between Venice and Stephen Lazarević of Serbia. Even in the time of the Balšas, however, a powerful local

¹ Phrantzes, p. 430; *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* xxii. p. 404.

family, that of the Crnojević, derived by some from the royal line of Nemanja itself¹, had made good its claim to a part of the country, and its head, Radić Crnoje, even styled himself "lord of the Zeta." After his death in battle against the Balšas in 1396, the family seems to have been temporarily crushed; but early in the fifteenth century two collateral members of it, the brothers Jurašević, had established their independence in the upper, or mountainous, portion of the Zeta, the barren sea of white limestone round Njeguš, which then began to be called by its modern name of Crnagora² (in Venetian, *Montenegro*), perhaps from the then predominant local clan, less probably from the "black" forests which are said to have once covered those glaring, inhospitable rocks. Venice found the brothers so useful in her struggle with the Balšas that she paid them a subsidy, and offered to recognise one of them as "*voivode* of the Upper Zeta," although they were supposed to be nominally subjects of the Despot of Serbia. A son³ of this *voivode*, Stephen Crnojević by name, revolted against the Serbian sovereignty, then weakened by its conflict with the Turks, made himself practically independent in his native mountains, but in 1455 admitted the overlordship of Venice, which had appointed him her "*captain and voivode*" in the Zeta. A solemn pact was signed, between the republic and the 51 communities which then composed Montenegro, on the sacred island of Vranina on the lake of Scutari: Venice swore to maintain the cherished usages of Balša and to permit no Roman Catholic bishop to rule over the Montenegrin Church; while Stephen Crnojević, victorious alike over Serbs and Turks, hoisted the banner of St Mark at Podgorica, and made his capital in the strong castle of Žabljak⁴.

On his death⁵ in 1466, his son and successor, Ivan the Black, was confirmed by Venice in his father's command as her "*captain and voivode*" in the Zeta. In this capacity he assisted with his brave Montenegrins in the defence of the Venetian city of Scutari against the Turks in 1474, an event still commemorated by a monument on a house in the Calle del Piovan at Venice and by a picture by Paolo Veronese in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio. Four years later he again aided the Venetian governor of Scutari and the heroic Dominican from Epirus who was the soul of the defence. But by the peace of 1479 the republic ceded Scutari to the Turks after an occupation of 85 years, and Montenegro lost this powerful obstacle to the Turkish advance from the south, the quarter from which the principality has always been most vulnerable. The conclusion of peace was a severe blow to the Montenegrin chief,

¹ Petrović (*trsl.* Ciampoli), *Storia del Montenegro*, p. 23.

² First found in a Ragusan document of 1362. (*Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* xxvii. p. 212.)

³ *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* xxi. pp. 10, 164, 205, 382, 384.

⁴ *Ibid.* xxii. pp. 67-8, 153.

⁵ *Ibid.* xxii. pp. 364, 383.

especially of a peace on such terms. Abandoned by Venice, Ivan the Black was now at the mercy of the invader. His capital was too near the lake of Scutari to be any longer a safe residence; accordingly, he set fire to Žabljak, and founded in 1484 his new capital at Cetinje, which remained the seat of the Montenegrin government. There he built a monastery and a church, and thither he transferred the metropolitan see of the Zeta, hitherto established in the Craina¹, the piece of the Dalmatian coast between the Narenta and the Cetina. The Turks occupied the lower Zeta; but a national ballad expresses the belief that Ivan the Black would one day awake from his sleep in the grotto of Obod near Rjeka, and lead his heroic Montenegrins to the conquest of Albania. At Obod he erected a fortress and a building to house a printing-press for the use of the church at Cetinje, and under his eldest son George the first books printed in Slavonic saw the light there in 1493, an achievement commemorated with much circumstance four centuries afterwards. But George Crnojević was driven from Montenegro in 1496 by his brother Stephen with the support of the Turks. The exiled prince took refuge in Venice, the home of his wife, whence, after a futile attempt to recover his dominions, he threw himself upon the mercy of the Sultan, embraced Islam, and died, a Turkish pensioner, in Anatolia. Meanwhile, Montenegro was governed by Stephen II till 1499, when² it was annexed to the *Sanjak* of Scutari and placed under a Turkish official who resided at Žabljak³. But the mountaineers resisted the Turkish tax-gatherers, and in 1514 Stephen II was restored by the Sultan⁴. According to tradition, one of his descendants, married to a Venetian wife who found residence at Cetinje both monotonous and useless, abandoned the Black Mountain for ever and retired to the delights of Venice in 1516, after transferring the supreme power to the bishop, who was assisted by a civil governor chosen from among the headmen of the Katunska district. The prince-bishop, or *Vladika*, was elective, until in 1696 the dignity became hereditary, with one interval, in the family of Petrović. Meanwhile, for some years after the final abdication of the Crnojević family, another brother of George, who had become a Musulman, held, under the name of Skanderbeg, the post of Turkish "governor of Montenegro," a land which, although the Turks have often invaded and overrun it, they never permanently conquered.

While Montenegro, the autonomous Mirdites, and the tiny republic of Poljica alone remained free on the west of the Balkan peninsula, the two Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia retained a large

¹ *Mon. spect. hist. Slav. Merid.* xxii. p. 67.

² Sanudo, *Diarii*, II. pp. 372, 504.

³ *Ibid.* xii. p. 153.

⁴ *Ibid.* xviii. p. 397.

measure of domestic independence, under the forms of vassalage, on the east. After a long period of civil war between rival claimants, who called in their neighbours and partitioned their distracted dominions, Wallachia acknowledged in 1456 a strong if barbarous ruler in the person of Vlad "the Impaler," and Moldavia in 1457 a vigorous prince in that of Stephen the Great. The Wallach's hideous cruelties do not belie his name; he executed 20,000 of his subjects to consolidate his throne; but he achieved by his savage punishments what his predecessors had failed to obtain, the loyalty of his terrified nobles and the suppression of brigandage. As soon as he felt secure at home, he defied his Turkish suzerain, refusing to send him the contingent of 500 children which Mahomet demanded in addition to the customary annual tribute. He impaled the Sultan's emissaries, and when the Sultan himself marched forth to avenge them in 1462 forced him to retire in disgrace. In the same year, however, "the Impaler" was driven from his throne by his brother, a Turkish puppet, aided by the great Prince of Moldavia. For the rest of the century Stephen overshadowed the petty rulers of the sister-principality, and became the leading spirit of resistance to the Turks in Eastern Europe. His father had, indeed, paid tribute to them as far back as 1456; but he completely routed them at the battle of Racova in 1475, the first time that a Turkish and a Moldavian army had met. Europe applauded his success; but, after in vain trying to form a league of the Christian Powers against the enemy, he realised at the end of his long reign that his efforts had only postponed the necessity of recognising the suzerainty of the Sultan. His son Bogdan in 1513 made his submission and promised to pay tribute, on condition that the Moldaves should retain the right of electing their own princes and that no Turks should reside in their country—a condition modified in 1541 by the imposition of a guard of 500 Turkish horsemen upon the prince of that period. Thus, largely owing to the fraternal quarrels of their rulers, both the principalities had fallen within the sphere of Turkish influence; their constantly changing princes, whether natives or Phanariote Greeks, were the creatures of the Sultan; but, unlike Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia, they never came under his direct rule, were never formally annexed to the Turkish Empire.

The medieval history of the Balkan states and the causes of their fall are full of significance for our own time. In the Near East, and in the Near East alone, the Middle Ages are but as yesterday to the newly-emancipated nations, which look upon the centuries of Turkish domination as a watch in the night, and aspire to take up the thread of their interrupted national existence where it was left by their ancient Tsars, each regardless of the other's overlapping claims to lands which have been redeemed from the Turk. The medieval records of the motley peninsula teach us to regard with doubt, in spite of Turkish vicinity, the prospect of common action between Christian races, which, if small

individually, would, if united, have formed a powerful barrier against the foreigner either from the East or from the West. But the greater nations of Christendom cannot afford to criticise too harshly their weaker brethren in the Balkans; for it was quite as much the selfishness and the mutual jealousy of the Western Powers as the fratricidal enmities of the Eastern States which allowed the East of Europe to be conquered by Asia, and which has even in our own day retarded its complete emancipation.

TABLES OF RULERS.

SERBIA.		BULGARIAN TSARS.		FRANKISH DUKES OF PHILIPPOLIS.	
Stephen Nemanja, "Great Župan"	1143 (or 1159)–1196 + 1200	Peter {	...	Renier de Trit	... 1204
Stephen, "Great Župan"	... 1196	John Asen I {	...	Gerard de Stroem	... 1229
[Vukan, "King of Dioclea"	King 1217	Kalojan {	...	[Bulgarian : 1235]	
Radoslav, King	... 1228	Boril ...	...		
Vladislav, King	... 1234–43	John Asen II ...	...		
	+ 1263	Kaliman I ...	...		
Stephen Uroš I, King	... 1243	Michael Asen ...	...		
Stephen Dragutin, King	1276–81 + 1316	Kaliman II ...	...		
Stephen Uroš II, Milutin, King	1281	Constantine Asen	...		
Constantine, King	... 1321	Ivailo	...		
Stephen Uroš III, Dečanski, King	... 1322	John Asen III ...	...		
[Vladislav, King	... 1321–4]	George Terteri I	...		
Stephen Uroš IV, Dušan, King	1331	Smilec	...		
	Tsar 1346	Theodore Svetoslav	...		
Stephen Uroš V, Tsar	... 1355–1371	George Terteri II	...		
[Simeon Uroš, Tsar	... 1356–71]	Michael Shishmanich	...		
Vukašin, King	... 1366–71]	John Stephen ...	...		
Lazar I Hrebeljanović, Prince	1371	John Alexander	...		
Lazar II, or Stephen Lazarević, Despot	... 1389–1427		...		
[Vuk Branković, Despot	... 1389]	John Shishman (Trnovo)	1362} – 1363 + 1395	John Sracimir (Viln)	1360–5; 1369–98
George Branković, Prince	... 1398]		or 1365}		
George Branković, Despot	... 1427		[Turkish : 1393]		
Irene	...				
Lazar III Branković, Despot	... 1456				
Lazar III	...				
Stephen Tomašević, Crown Prince	... 1457				
of Bosnia, Despot	... 1458–9				
	[Turkish : 1453]				

HUM. (*Herzegovina*.)

Miroslav, Prince ...	1180-90
[Hungarian: 1198-1202]	
Peter, Prince	c. 1220
[Hungarian: 1237]	
Tolen, Prince	1239
Andreas, Prince ...	1239
Radoslav, <i>Župan</i> ...	1254
[Hungarian: 1254]	
[Serbian: c. 1284-1325]	
[Bosnian: 1325-57]	
[$\frac{1}{2}$ Hungarian: 1357-74]	
$\frac{1}{2}$ [Vojoslav Vojnov, Count	1357-71]
$\frac{1}{2}$ [Nicolo Altomanović ...	1371-4]
[Bosnian *: 1374-1435]	
Stephen Vukčić ...	1435
"Duke of St Sava" ...	1445-66
Vladislav	1466-7
Vlatko	1467-83
Vlatko, "Duke of St Sava" ...	[Turkish: 1483]

* Sandalj Hrančić-Kosača practically independent 1404-35.

BOSNIA.

Borić ...	<i>Ban.</i> 1154-63
...	[Byzantine Empire: 1166-80]
Kulin ...	<i>Ban.</i> 1180-1204
Stephen	<i>Ban.</i> after 1204
Matthew Ninoslav	<i>Ban.</i> 1232-37; 1240-50
[Kingdom of Hungary: 1237-40]	
Prijesda I, "the great"	<i>Ban.</i> after 1250-87
Prijesda II and Stephen Kotroman ...	<i>Bans.</i> 1287-90
Stephen Koroman, alone ...	1290-1302
Paul Šubić ...	<i>Ban.</i> 1299-1312
Mladen Šubić ...	<i>Ban.</i> 1312-22

Lower Bosnia

[under Hungary]. Hungarian magnates, 1254-64.

Duchy of Mačva and Bosnia	
Agnes, Duchess	1264
Béla, Duke ...	1271-2
Stephen Borić ...	<i>Ban.</i> 1272
Egidius ...	<i>Ban.</i> 1273
Ugrin ...	<i>Ban.</i> 1279
Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, Duchess	1280-84
Stephen Dragutin, ex-King of Serbia	1284-1316

Stephen Kotromanić	1322
Stephen Tvrtko I	1376
Stephen Dabiša, King	1391
Helena Gruba, Queen	1395
Stephen Ostoja, King	1398
Stephen Tvrtko II Tvrtković, King	1404
Stephen Ostoja (2), King	1408
Stephen Ostojić, King	1418
Stephen Tvrtko II Tvrtković (2), King	1421
Stephen Thomas Ostojić, King	1443
Stephen Tomašević, King	1461-3

[Turkish 1463, except *Banat* of Jajce: Hungarian 1463-1528 and *Banat* of Srebrenik: „

THE ZETA (MONTENEGRO).

		[Part Venetian: 1421-1479]		[Part Serbian: 1421-7]			
Balka I	...	...	c. 1360	Stephen I Crnojević	...	...	...
Stracimir	...	...	1362	Ivan I	...	...	c. 1427
George I	...	...	1372	George I	...	...	1466
Balka II	...	...	1378	Stephen II	...	...	1490-6 + before 1514
George II	...	...	1385	Ivan II	...	...	1496-9; 1514
Balka III	...	...	1405-21	George II	...	...	1515
				[Skanderbeg Crnojević, Turkish "Governor of Montenegro"]	...	...	1515-16
					...	...	1523-6]

Radić Crnoje
George and Alexius Jurašević ... 1392-96
1403-c. 1427

VENETIAN COLONIES IN ALBANIA.

Durazzo	1205-15; 1392-1501
Alessio	1393-1478
Drivasto	1396-1419; 1421-3; 1442-78
Scutari	1396-1479
Antivari	1421-23; 1444-1571
Dulcigno	1421-1571
Dagno	1444-56; 1458-78
Satti	}

THE REPUBLIC OF POLJICA.

Founded	...	...	944
Under Hungarian <i>Bans</i> .	...	c. 1350	
Under Venetian suzerainty	...	1444	

OTTOMAN SULTANS.

Osmān	...	1299
Orkhān	...	1326
Murād I	...	1360
Bayazīd I	...	1389
<i>Sultān</i>	...	1402
<i>Masā</i> ...	...	1410
Mahomet I	...	1413
Murād II	...	1421
Mahomet II	...	1451
Bayazīd II	...	1481

EAST ROMAN EMPERORS FROM 1261

Michael VIII Palaeologus	...	1259-82
Andronicus II	...	1282-1332
Michael IX	...	1295-1320
Andronicus III	...	1325(28)-41
John V	...	1341-76
John VI Cantacuzene	...	1347-54
Andronicus IV	...	1376-79
John V (restored)	...	1379-91
John VII, usurper	...	1390
Manuel II	...	1391-1425
John VII, co-regent (restored)	...	1399-1412
John VIII	...	1423-48
Constantine XI Dragases	...	1448-53

PRINCES OF WALLACHIA.

Radou I Negrou	...	c. 1290
Ivanko Basaraba	...	1310
Nicholas Alexander Basaraba	...	1330
Vladislav I	...	1364
Radou II	...	1372
Dan I	...	1385
Mircea "the Great"	...	1386
[First Tributary to Turkey: 1391]		
Vlad I	...	1394-5
Michael I	...	1418
Dan II	...	1420
Radou III	...	1422
Dan II (2)	...	1427
Vlad II "the Devil"	...	1432
Dan III	...	1446
Vladislav II	...	1448
Vlad III "the Impaler"	...	1456
Radou IV "the Fair"	...	1462
Laiote Basaraba	...	1465
Vlad III (2) "the Impaler"	...	1477
Laiote Basaraba "the Young"	...	1477
Vlad IV "the Monk"	...	1481
Radou V "the Great"	...	1494

PRINCES OF MOLDAVIA.

[Under Hungarian suzerainty: c. 1298-1349]		
Bogdan I	...	1349
Latzcou	...	1370
Juga I Coriatović	...	1374
Peter I Mouchate	...	1375
Roman I	...	1390
Stephen I	...	1394
Stephen II	...	1395
Peter II	...	1399
Roman II	...	1400
Juga II	...	1401
Alexander I "the Good"	...	1401
Elias, alone	...	1433
Stephen III, alone	...	1433
Elias (2)	...	1435
Stephen III	...	1444
Roman III	...	1447
Peter III	...	1448
Roman III, alone	...	1449
Peter III (2)	...	1451
Alexander II	...	1455
Bogdan II	...	1456
Peter III (3)	...	1457
Alexander II (2)	...	1457
Peter III, alone	...	1457
[First Tributary to Turkey: 1456]		
Stephen IV "the Great"	...	1504
Bogdan III	...	1504